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CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL

CONVERSATION ON SAVING FAITH,

FOR THE YOUNG,

IN

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

AND

A CONFESSION OF FAITH,

OF THE

MENNONITES.

WITH

AN APPENDIX.

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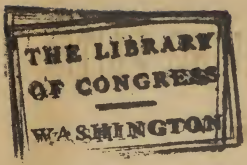

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Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.—Psalm 34, 11.

For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.—1 Tim. 4, 8.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.—1 Thes. 5, 21.

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PREFACE.

THE committee to whom was referred the translation and publication of this work, herewith present it to the public. That it is as perfect as it should be, they are not prepared to say; but that it is as perfect as they have been able to get it by much pains and labor, they are willing to acknowledge.

With respect to the motives which led to the publication of this work, and the propriety of such an undertaking, considerable might be said; but as long prefaces are seldom read, and are withal useless, unless the works to which they are prefixed themselves are read, the committee would merely state, in behalf of themselves and others who have interested themselves in the work,—that it is evidently proper, for various reasons, that a work of the kind should be published in the prevailing language of the country; and the more so, as the wish has frequently been expressed by the English reading public to become acquainted with the doctrines of the Mennonite church. Here then there is an op-

portunity afforded them of doing so. May they "judge all, and hold fast that which is good."

May the good Lord also add his blessing, that this work may do something towards promoting his kingdom on earth; and then we have our highest reward for our labor.

THE COMMITTEE.

BERLIN, (*Canada West*) 1856.

DIRECTIONS

TO

TRUE GODLINESS, DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

QUESTION 1. Should man besides the necessary cares belonging to his bodily wants, also observe and consider more; so that he may keep his mind in a good state of rest?

ANSWER. Yes, certainly, as he would otherwise live like a brute in the world; wherefore he should, as a reasonable being, consider this well, and maintain his proper position amongst other creatures, (which live along with him, and also receive their nourishment from the earth;) whereby he will then find, that he does not only surpass the creatures in many things in knowledge,—but also, that he is possessed of a much higher spirit than creatures.

Quest. 2. Are there also men who are not conscious of possessing a higher spirit than brutes, and yet maintain, that they can keep their minds in a good state of rest in this life?

Ans. Of such men there are more than enough in the world; who show not only by their words, but also by their actions, course of life, and countenance, that they know nothing

of their salvation, much less that they are concerned about it; yea, who know neither themselves nor their condition, and who live worse than the brutes: but whenever any of these men become of another and a better mind, and get into other reflections, (which cannot take place, however, without divine agency) and continue in them,—they will come not only to a knowledge of the nature of their condition, but also to a knowledge of themselves, and their higher spirit,—as many wise Heathen came to great knowledge, through which they endeavored to bring other men (who from inattention forgot themselves, and lived more like brutes than men,) to a better and higher knowledge, by their ingenious sayings, amongst which the best and most useful is considered to be the one: "*Know thyself.*"

Quest. 3. Are there also men who do not know themselves as such?

Ans. Not only have wise Heathen found this by examination, but experience teaches daily, that there are men, who like blind heathen, have no knowledge of themselves, but live more brutish than human; from which it is evident, that they neither know themselves, their Creator, nor the spirit that is in them.

Quest. 4. In what then, does man's true knowledge of himself consist?

Ans. This knowledge consists in two things. 1. To know that of and from himself, he has no power to do or understand any thing, either in matters external or spiritual. 2. To have a

knowledge of his transitory and troublesome state of life.

Quest. 5. Did the wise Heathen obtain the knowledge *of themselves*, wherewith they could teach others with their sayings?

Ans. The wise Heathen obtained a knowledge of themselves through the light of nature, a diligent observation of their mind, as well as that of external nature, in regard to other living creatures; as also by observing the glorious firmament and the active power visible in all creatures. By this means they came to still higher knowledge, namely: that there can be nothing of itself; but that there must be a First Cause, a Head and Being, in which, and through which, all things are, and through whose power every thing is kept in state and being.

First Article of Faith of God.

Quest. 6. What First Cause then, is that, in which, from which, and through which, we and all things are, and are kept in being?

Ans. This First Cause is the Great and Incomprehensible God, who has created every thing in heaven above, on earth beneath, and in the water; yea, who is the Creator and Preserver of all things, and who keeps every thing by the power of his word; from this God, man has received a much higher spirit than other creatures, as he has been "created in his own image." Gen. 1, 2. 7. And has also been appointed by Him, lord over all things.

Quest. 7. Are the sayings of the wise Heathen sufficient whereby to come to this high knowledge of God ?

Ans. The sayings of the wise Heathen are not sufficient for this purpose, although we may learn something from them ; but the Holy Scriptures teach us this knowledge with much clearness and many particulars.

Quest. 8. In what respect then are the Holy Scriptures preferable to other writings.

Ans. The Holy Scriptures are scriptures given by inspiration of God, and are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3, 16. They are given through highly enlightened, holy men, who were gifted by the spirit of God above other men, and who spake these scriptures by inspiration of God, "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Sam. 23, 2. 2 Pet. 1, 21.

Quest. 9. Do the Holy Scriptures also teach, that we should come to a knowledge of ourselves ?

Answ. Of this we have so much information in the Holy Scriptures, that it would be superfluous to quote it here; the holy men of God (among whom was the king and prophet David) saw, that many men forgot themselves, and did not discern the glory of their Creator. He says, Psalm 100 : "Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that made us, and not we ourselves." And again, Psalm 39, 5. 6.; "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew; sure-

ly they are disquieted in vain." Again, Gal. 6, 3.: "For if a man think himself to be something, (understand, of himself) when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Further, 1 Cor. 4, 7.: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

Quest. 10. Is it enough for man, to come to a knowledge of himself and of God, in order that he may thereby, in this life, have a mind and conscience at rest?

Ans. That is not sufficient: he must go further in his knowledge, in order that he may obtain still more knowledge of the Great God; through whom and from whom he himself and every thing exists, as the Holy Scriptures also testify of God, that He is He who upholds "all things by the word of his power." Heb. 1, 3.

Quest. 11. Did those who had not the Holy Scriptures, not come to a true knowledge of God, through a consideration of their condition, and the observation of created things?

Ans. Neither the one nor the other was sufficient; for while they saw and knew from created things, that there is and must be a God, who created such things; but did not glorify him "as God; neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Rom. 1, 21. 22.; Eph. 4, 18. For "that which may be known of God," God had revealed to them. Rom. 1,

19. And what they further came to, is added or explained in said chapter, (v. 28.)

Quest. 12. Is it sufficient that we absolutely believe and hold, that there is a God, who created the heavens, the earth, and the water, together with all things that are on and in them?

Ans. It is certainly not sufficient, that we merely believe and hold, that there is a God, leaving him as such, without conforming to his Holy Word; for "it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Rom. 1, 17. 18. And it is also testified of such men: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Tit. 1, 16.

Quest. 13. What more then, must be observed and done by man, besides having faith in, and knowledge of God, in order that he may have a mind at rest, and hope in God in this life?

Ans. Man must by faith entirely submit and give himself up to the Great God, and show himself in all things obedient to him; yea, also honor, praise, serve, and fear him; as is much required of us in Holy Scripture; in which God represents himself to man, as a Lord, yea as a Father, when he says: "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of Hosts."—

Mal. 1, 6. So also Moses teaches the children of Israel, to know their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, in the following words: Now Israel! What does the Lord thy God require of thee else, than that thou lovest him with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; honorest, fearest and servest him, and walkest in his ways; that it may be well with thee and thy children forever. Deut. 6.

Quest. 14. Is the acceptable and perfect will of God sufficiently made known to us in Holy Scripture, namely, as to how we may live and walk acceptably before him?

Ans. It is incontrovertible, that the perfect and acceptable will of God is sufficiently made known to us in Holy Scripture; inasmuch as it is frequently represented as the inspired word of God throughout its contents; and amongst others by Isaiah when he says: "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them." Isaiah 34, 16. And again by Paul to Timothy, when he says:—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3, 16. 17.

Quest. 15. Which is the chief article taught in Holy Scripture, which we are to observe and

consider, and from which we may hope in God to have eternal life ?

Ans. This chief article is, as has already been observed in part, faith in God and his holy word, accompanied by a pure and fervent love ; so that faith and love work together ; for where true faith in God exists, love is its companion. Now out of this faith hope is born, so that one springs from the other ; for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. 11, 6. For when the Lord Jesus was once asked, which was the great commandment in the law, he answered : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. 22, 37—40. Therefore Paul also says, 1 Tim. 1, 5. : "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Gal. 5, 6. : "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love." And 1 Cor. 13, 13. : "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity."

Quest. 16. Are then these two articles, namely, hope and love, so connected with faith, that without them, we can have no hope in God and eternal life ?

Ans. Yes, certainly, it is faith, from which

true love has its origin, and through which our hope is strengthened, that is so necessary a thing, that without it, it is impossible to please God; as we have just seen from Heb. 11, 6.: "But he that believeth not will be damned."—Mark 16, 16.

Quest. 17. What then is faith properly in itself?

Ans. Faith is, that we accept and receive that as truth which has been propounded to us from Holy Scripture, by devout men; which we should hold and believe as being as infallible, as if we had seen it ourselves, or heard it from the mouth of God. In accordance with this also is the testimony of Paul, Heb. 11, 1.: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." As we also read of Moses in the same chapter, verse 27.: "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

Quest. 18. What then must we properly and chiefly believe of God, and how must we believe in him, and be steadfast in such faith; inasmuch as a proper faith in him, is frequently called a saving faith; which is the foundation of a happy hope in him?

Ans. Besides faith in God, as already mentioned, we must also believe the testimony of the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ, the living Son of God: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ,

whom thou hast sent." John 17, 3. Paul also says, Rom. 10, 9. 10.: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Quest. 19. On what must saving faith be grounded or built?

Ans. Not on man's wisdom, or enticing, pretty words, proceeding out of his own heart; but on the infallible word of God alone, to which the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are serviceable, being written and produced by holy men, "moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1, 21.—Also confirmed by signs and wonders. Thereon Paul grounded his faith when he says: "I believe all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." Acts 24, 14. This he said, because the Gospel was not yet then written. To this Christ also directs, when he says: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7, 38.

Quest. 20. Is the general description of faith called *Symbolum Apostolorum*, or *Apostolic Faith*, or *Apostolic Confession of Faith*, not the true Formulary of the Christian Faith; and has he who confesses it, not the true Confession of the Christian Faith?

Ans. The so called *Symbolum Apostolorum* contains, it is true, the chief articles of the

Christian Faith, and may, in so far, be regarded as a Confession of the same; inasmuch as it agrees with the writings of the apostles; but it is not to be received as truth, that, as some pretend, the twelve apostles brought it into its present form, and that each of them composed an article of it; it is however not, on this account, in itself objectionable; but saving evangelical faith requires yet more particulars to a full instruction in it.

Quest. 21. Is then the foregoing Formulary of Faith, when expressed according to the words it contains, not the right Confession of the Christian Faith, which is required of a Christian, and which is necessary to salvation?

Ans. Saving Faith does not consist in the production of an article thus composed, which is conceived by the memory, and brought forth by the mouth; or else school children would have saving faith, as they can readily express this article. No. The right and full faith to salvation must be planted and conceived in the hearts and minds of men, by reading and hearing the word of God; and when this has taken root, it will by its efficacious power, produce fruits of faith, which will be seen by others, as has already been said in the 15th question and answer to the same, and proved from Gal. 5, 6; 1 Tim. 1, 5. Yes, that true faith to salvation does not merely rest in the heart; but that it must also be increased in the same, and brought forth, is also proved from Rom. 10, 10. That

if we believe with the heart, we are justified, and make confession with the mouth, we are saved —was the reason that Philip said to the eunuch: "If thou believest with all thine heart," &c. Acts 8, 37. And that faith comes into the heart of man by hearing the word of God, or by reading and reflecting on the same, is not only seen from this example of the eunuch, and in the same chapter from that of the people of Samaria; but also from the sending of the apostles to preach the gospel. Acts 8, 14. 17; Mark 16, 15. 16. For this reason Paul also says, Rom. 10, 14: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" And lastly, in verse 17, in the same chapter, he says: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Quest. 22. Has then the requisite faith also certain signs, whereby it may be known to be saving faith; as a good tree is known by the fruit which it brings forth?

Ans. Where no fruit of faith is shown or to be seen, there the full and true faith in the great and true God does not exist, whereby the promised salvation by grace, is obtained; for thus it is testified of faith, Hab. 2, 4.: "The just shall live by his faith." And Heb. 10, 38.: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." The same is to be inferred from the words of Peter, (2. Pet. 1, 5 – 9): "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and

to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off." And James says, (2 c. 26 v.): "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also;" which agrees with the words of Christ, Matt. 5, 16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven."

Quest. 23. Is not that a perfect faith, if we believe in the Great God of Heaven, who rules with power and glory over every thing in heaven and on earth, like a king and emperor over their dominions?

Ans. The Great God of heaven and earth is represented to us as being in heaven, as he also is; but he is so represented to us, because we are on earth. The Lord God, although he created the earth, and yet does not need it, is represented as being locally separated from us, by being in heaven, as is taught in the Lord's Prayer, Matt. 6, 9: "Our Father which art in heaven," &c. We must not however therefore imagine, that the Lord God is confined to heaven, and separated from earth, as, for instance, a king resides in his capitol, separated from the

rest of his country and subjects; but the Lord God is a God every where present, as David amply testifies in his 139th Psalm; and as the Lord himself speaks through Isaiah: "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." Isaiah 66, 1. As the wise king Solomon also expresses himself in dedicating the temple, when he says: "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." 1 Kings 8, 27. Yes, although God is frequently represented as being in heaven, yet he is "not far from every one of us." Acts 17, 27.

ARTICLE FIRST, OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

Quest. 24. Is God as well present with us on earth as he is with the angels in heaven?

Ans. Certainly the Lord God is as well present with us on earth as he is with the angels in heaven; and we people on earth are as well in his presence as the angels in heaven are in his presence. For thus says the Lord through Jeremiah, (c. 23, v. 23. 24.): "Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Do I not fill heaven and earth." And through Isaiah, (c. 57, v. 15): "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." The same is confessed by the king and prophet David, (Psalm 139, 7. 8.) when he says: "Whither shall I go

from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there," &c.

ARTICLE SECOND, OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

Quest. 25. Is there any thing more to be believed and confessed of God, than that he is as well present on earth as in heaven; and consequently every where present?

Ans. There are yet more and different attributes in God, who is a God of heaven and earth, to be believed and confessed, namely, such as these: That he is a Great Lord, yea, a Lord of lords, and a King of kings, who has not only created heaven and earth, and the water, and every thing that is in and on them, but also, that every thing belongs to him; for thus it is testified of him, Psalm 24, 1: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." And further, Psalm 95, 3—5: "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hand formed the dry land."

ARTICLE THIRD, OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

Quest. 26. Does saving faith yet imply some particular Divine attributes, if it is to be a perfect evangelical faith?

Ans. In order that we may stand well and

perfect in our faith in God, it must, according to Holy Scripture, also contain and imply a knowledge of the Divine attributes, as made known to us in Holy Scripture; so that we believe as well, that the Lord God is a God of such attributes, as that we believe that he is God; inasmuch as from such faith, as well as from a knowledge of the Divine attributes alone, obedience to, and the fear of God follow; in which attributes God is said to be excellent, as testified by Jeremiah, (c. 10, v. 6. 7.) when he says: "There is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O king of nations?" His greatness and power David also expresses—and in these words, (Psalm 50, 3—5): "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."* This knowledge also induced David to say: "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments." Psalm 119, 120.

Quest. 27. What Divine attributes are those revealed to us in Holy Scripture, which it is as

*In Luther's translation of the Bible into German, this verse is translated as follows:—"Gather my saints together unto me; those that *esteem* my covenant more than sacrifice." This translation is preferred by some.

necessary for us to believe of God, as to believe that there is a God?

Ans. The Divine attributes revealed to us in Holy Scripture, and which we should firmly believe, are the following: That, namely, the Lord God is ONE GOD, who is eternal, almighty, true, just, holy, and omniscient; in which attributes he exists as well in himself, as in exercising them over man; and shows mercy to all who fear him, and listen to him, as a gracious, merciful, long-suffering, meek God; who shows "mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments." Ex. 20, 6. But the seven first Spiritual attributes, which serve as a caution to the pious in their pilgrimage through this world, redound to the fear and terror of the wicked and ungodly; inasmuch as they abuse and despise the goodness of God; and after their "hardness and impenitent hearts treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds." Rom. 2, 5. 6. On the contrary however, the goodness of God is at all times over them that fear and love him; and they can comfort themselves with David, that the Lord "knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103, 14.

Quest. 28. Why is it so necessary to believe, that the Lord God is a God of such Divine attributes?

Ans. It is so necessary to believe this for the

reason, that such belief serves to increase holy adoration, esteem, and veneration for the Divine Majesty, amongst men; and that it is an active inducement to the attentive to fear God; for if the Divine attributes were not incorporated in the Christian Faith, men would again easily fall into heathen errors; who had all kinds of unmoveable, dead images, and held them as their gods; which had indeed "hands, feet, eyes, ears, and mouths" made for them; but could therewith neither "handle, walk, see, hear, nor speak." Psalm 115, 5—7. And each held in his imagination his own god as greater than all others; as they also judged of the God of heaven, whom Paul preached. Acts 19, 27, 28. So it may also be seen in the adventure of Jonah, that each man cried to his god. Jonah 1, 5. But our God "is over all, blessed forever." Rom. 9, 5.

Quest. 29. What evidence have we in Holy Scripture, that the Lord God is a God of such Divine attributes, and to what is it serviceable?

Ans. Of such evidence we have plenty in Holy Scripture; and amongst those who first gave evidence to this effect, was Moses, with whom the Lord spake "face to face;" (Ex. 33, 11.) who received the first words of God on tables of stone, and delivered them to man; who also testifies of the ONENESS of God, (Deut. 6, 4.) as follows: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD." And again, Deut. 4, 35: "Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know

that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him." And through the prophet Isaiah God testifies of himself, when he says: "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me." "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me." Isaiah 45, 5; 46, 9. And Solomon says at the close of his prayer, 1 Kings 8, 60: "That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else."

Quest. 30. To what may the knowledge be serviceable, that the Lord God is ONE GOD?

Ans. Such knowledge may be serviceable to us in many respects. First, if we should peradventure, by occasion, come into strange countries among heathen people, where strange gods, or the sun, moon, or stars were worshipped, and we were urged to do the same; we might then think of the doctrine of Christ, when he says: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matt. 4, 10, As the angel said to John: "Worship God." Rev. 19, 10. For though we were at the ends of the earth, in Asia, Africa, Europe, or America, or elsewhere, — we would still have our God there to worship; as was the case with Daniel in the lion's den, and the three young men in the fiery furnace; who, although they were in a strange land amongst heathen people, still worshipped the God of heaven, and were heard; as is to be seen in Daniel, c. 3.; as also in the case of Jonah in the fish's belly. Jonah 2, 2.

Quest. 31. How and where is it certified and proved, that the Lod God is ONE GOD?

Ans. It is declared by and proved from the works of creation, as well as from Scripture, that the Lord God was before all visible and invisible things were created, and although these, namely, heaven and earth, and all things visible, will pass away; He will remain the same God as he was before, as the pious king David testifies of him through the spirit of God, (Ps. 90, 1. 2.): "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." And again, Ps. 102, 25—27: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." This was also acknowledged by Abraham, who "planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God," Gen. 21, 33.

Quest. 32. To what purpose is this knowledge of the eternity of God serviceable?

Ans. This knowledge is in many respects serviceable to the comfort of the pious, and to the strengthening of their faith; particularly to the comfort of themselves and children, when they

consider that they have the Lord God as well with and about them, as he was from the beginning with all the pious ancient fathers to the enlightening of their understanding, their help and protection, when they walked in his fear, and continued in the right faith; as did the ancient fathers; of which Isaiah testifies, (c. 40, v. 28. 29.) when he says: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Thus have the pious not only such a kind God over them during their lifetime; but also a God to whom they may at their death confidently give in charge their children, with a similar assurance, if they only fear God. With such consolation did old Tobias address his son. Tob. 4, 6. As an example may also be taken the children of Jonadab, son of Rechab, Jer. 35. As David also assures; for after speaking of the eternity of God, he says: "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." Psalm 102, 28. And in Psalm 115, and 125, 1., he says in substance as follows: That the Lord will always abide with the pious "forever," that he is "their hope and their shield," and that those who fear him, also hope in him, not only in this life; but their souls also hope for a happy existence in the life to come; so that

even as they are from the eternal God, so they must also abide eternally. The same is confirmed in substance in Rev. 22, 3—6.

Quest. 33. By what do we perceive and know, that the Lord God is an Almighty God, and can so firmly believe the same?

Ans. God's almightiness (omnipotence) may especially be seen in the great and incomprehensible works of Creation, and the preservation of all visible things; which have been in a state of operation for many hundred years; and all this by the "word of his power," as the pious king David also acknowledges, Psalm 33, 9.: "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." So God also spake to Abraham: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." Gen. 17, 1.

Quest. 34. In what respect can the knowledge be serviceable to our faith, that the Lord God is an Almighty God?

Ans. This knowledge may be serviceable to man for good in many respects; when he, namely, perceives and believes, that God has power over every thing, to do and carry out what he has promised in his word; yea also in all the adversities with which the pious may meet in this life. And first indeed it is serviceable in reminding him of his due obedience, to live piously and righteously, as said before, that God said to Abraham, (Gen. 17, 1.): "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." And Peter says, (1 Pet. 5, 6.): "Humble yourselves therefore under the

mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." 2. It is serviceable to the pious and godly as a great and sure consolation in all their necessities and tribulations, that God is mighty to preserve, to help, and to save them; as also David speaks of the ways of the Lord, (Ps. 50, 15.): "Call unto me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." And God himself speaks through Isaiah, (c. 43, v. 2.): "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Of all this we have sufficient examples and proof in the case of the children of Israel in the Red Sea, the prophet Jonas, the three young men in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lion's den, Joseph in Egypt, and David in the persecution of Saul; who all felt and experienced God's omnipotence in their time of need; as is to be seen in Psalm 50, 15.—as already mentioned.

Quest. 35. Is this knowledge of the omnipotence of God, also of use or service to those who do not live piously?

Ans. As excellent and wholesome as it is for the believing and pious, so dreadful it is to the profligate, and to those who live on so securely in disobedience and sin; so that they will be affrighted and tremble, when they shall hear of God's threatenings against and punishments of their ungodly lives, and how God has shown his

power in the execution of his judgments; as is manifest in the case of Sodom, Gomorrah, Pharaoh and his host, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Jezebel, Absalom, and Jerusalem; which Manasses also realized and expresses in his Penitential Prayer, when he says: "All men tremble before thy power; for the majesty of thy glory cannot be borne, and thine angry threatening toward sinners is importable." (Prayer of Manasses 5.) As the Lord God himself also speaks of the infliction of his punishments upon the ungodly, as may be seen in Isaiah 1. Rev. 6, 15.—17.

Quest. 36. Is it also necessary, that we believe and confess, that God is a true God?

Ans. It is necessary to believe, that God is a true God, not only for the sake of the truth, that there is a God; but also that God himself is the Truth; and that all that his servants, the prophets and apostles, have brought forth of him, is firm, sure, and infallible truth; as Paul testifies: "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Rom. 3, 4. As also Moses says, (Num. 23, 19): "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Through the opinion, that truth is stronger than all things, the young man Zorobabel gained the prize in preference of his comrades. He says at the close of his speech: "Blessed be the God of truth." 1 Esdras 4, 40.

Quest. 37. To what then is it especially serviceable, to believe, that the Lord God is a true God?

Ans. It is not only serviceable to the pious as an especial consolation; but also to sinners, when they hear the word of God propounded to them for their conversion and reformation: but still more especially is it serviceable to the pious as a consolation in all occurring accidents, that they can firmly depend on God's word and promises, as to what he has promised to give them, as well in this life, as in the life to come; therefore they can place their hope and confidence firmly thereon, as David says: "For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth." Psalm 33, 4. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2 Cor. 1, 20. "He is a buckler to all those that trust in him." Psalm 18, 30.

Quest. 38. Is it also serviceable to any thing else, to believe, that God is true in his word?

Ans. It is already explained above, that such faith is a great consolation to the pious. Now just as it serves the pious as a consolation, so it is on the contrary, to ungodly, wilful and impenitent sinners, a certain assurance of their punishment, if they continue and persist in their sinful course of life; for it is to be known, that what God has pronounced concerning such in his word, will certainly come over them, as Paul says: "Despisest thou the riches of his good-

ness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds." Rom. 2, 4—6. Therefore it serves sinners as a fear and dread, as Solomon says: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." Prov. 28, 1.

Quest. 39. Whence are we to believe, that the Lord God is a Holy God?

Ans. This is not only made known to us in his word; but if we ponder in our minds over the Divine perfections and majesty, we may therefrom comprehend and judge of his Holiness; for Paul was even permitted to say of that which is human: "If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." Rom. 11, 16. Now if that was holy which was sacrificed according to the law of the Lord, it follows, that He also must be holy to whom such sacrifice was made, namely, God; who besides his angels is holy; and that these are holy, may be seen from Matt. 25, 31. But how much more is God holy, who created them: so that the angels may of right cry out: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." Isaiah 6, 3. And this the Lord God also speaks of himself through Moses: "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." Lev. 11, 44. 45; 19, 2. 1 Pet. 1, 16.

Quest. 40. To what is the knowledge serviceable, that the Lord God is a holy God?

Ans. It is serviceable to awaken and incite all pious and true Christians to a holy life and conversation, wherewith they show themselves to be children of their heavenly father, and that they belong through faith in Jesus Christ, to the family of God, and can call him "Father" in their prayers. Matt. 6, 9. This, Peter says, is their calling: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." 1 Pet. 1, 15. And Paul also writes: "He (Christ) hath reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight." Col. 1, 21. 22. Even as the holy Zechariah prophesied: "That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him (God) without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke 1, 74. 75.

Quest. 41. Whereby can we know, that we should believe, that the Lord God is a just God?

Ans. That we must also understand and conclude from his Divine majesty and perfections, besides that it is declared to us in his holy word, that he is just in his judgments on all the doings of men, whether they be good or evil. 1. In this life. 2. After this life at the day of judgment; as David testifies of both when he says: "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright."

Psalm 11, 7. "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. Psalm 7, 11. 12. The Lord God also says himself: "I give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jer. 17, 10. And as the Lord God is just on the doings of men in this life, so will he also "judge the world in righteousness" at the day of judgment. Acts 17, 31. And this is also declared by Malachi (c. 4, v. 1. —3.) and by Matthew (c. 25, v. 34. 41.)

Quest. 42. To what may the knowledge be serviceable, that the Lord God is a just God?

Ans. It is indeed serviceable to all men in many respects for good, if they would only always think about it, and consider, that God is a just God. But it is first serviceable to the pious as a precaution, to administer justice and right in all their doings, their business and conversation, trade and profession, and that no one does in any wise oppress, take the advantage of, or "defraud his brother"; for the Lord, says Paul, "is an avenger of all such." 1 Thes. 4, 6. As God also speaks through Zechariah: "These are the things that ye shall do; speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates." Zechariah 8, 16. "Whoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." 1 John 3, 10. Secondly, it may serve as a particular consolation to the

pious, when they do their duty in their calling in justice and righteousness, but are nevertheless oppressed, persecuted, ill-treated, slandered and ridiculed, on account of their piety; as was Joseph by his brethren, (Gen. 37.) and Susanna by the ancient wicked judges. (Susanna 42, 43.) Yes, it serves them as a consolation, when they thus see, how the Lord carries out and defends the cause of the innocent; for "the integrity of the upright shall guide them," says Solomon. (Prov. 11, 3.) Thus, the pious may and shall be happy in God in persecution; inasmuch as they know, that God knows and judges them differently from what men do: For "the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. The righteous also shall hold on his way." Job 17, 8. 9. Of this we have an example in the case of David in the persecution of Saul. 1 Sam. 19, 10.

Quest. 43. Is the knowledge of God's justice also in any way serviceable to sinners?

Ans. A consideration of God's justice may serve to inspire profligate and wilful sinners with fear and terror, as it does the pious with consolation, when they hear of God's justly threatened punishments, which God remembers: "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isaiah 3, 11. And on those on whom God himself will pass the heavy sentence of woe, on them it will remain. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness

and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Rom. 1, 18. Now if such sinners see God's justice in the punishment of sin, it may awaken in them repentance and sorrow for sin, and a reformation of life; as may be seen in the case of those who became converted at Pentecost. Acts 2. For if God's word, God's omniscience, omnipotence, and justice, are discerned by sinners,—sorrow for sin is not far, and which awakens an internal sorrow and fear, as David says: "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments." Ps. 119, 120.

Quest. 44. Is God also an omniscient God, to whom every thing is known that men do?

Ans. That the Lord God is an omniscient God, must follow from his omnipotence, even if it were not made known or revealed to us in Holy Scripture; but it is made known to us in Scripture: "He that planteth the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" Psalm 94, 9. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord." Jer. 23, 24. And Paul testifies of this, when he says: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4, 13.

Quest. 45. How may this knowledge of the omnscience of God be serviceable to us, if we believe and confess the same?

Ans. This knowledge of and belief in the omniscience of God, is a chief article of the Chris-

tian Faith; inasmuch as man is thereby incited and animated to obedience towards God, the leaving off of evil, and reformation of life; for if God were an almighty and just God only, and not also an omniscient God, he would be circumstanced like a potentate who could not exercise his power and execute his judgments, because the misdeeds of his subjects could be hidden from him. But as we know that the Lord God is omniscient, we must ever confess with David: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off." Psalm 139, 1. 2. And this belongs to the omniscience of God, that the prayers of the pious, although they are performed in secret, by each person according to his concern, are known to and heard by him, as David again says: "There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Ps. 139, 4. And this was the consolation of the pious Hezekiah when he thought he had to die, that all his doings, yea, his heart was known to the Lord. He says: "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." Isaiah 38, 3.

Quest. 46. Is this knowledge of God's omniscience also in any way serviceable to profligate sinners?

Ans. As long as such sinners live on in unbelief, and say in their hearts, with all the un-

godly: "There is no God," and "God is not in all their thoughts," (Ps. 10, 4.) such knowledge is of no use to them; but if they are not yet wholly sunk in infidelity, nor avow such sentiments, and then come to think of the omniscience of God, it may serve them as a beginning to cease from and leave off their wicked and sinful course of life, or else they have to fear and dread God's threatened punishment, as Isaiah says: (c. 29, v. 15.) "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" And David confesses the same before the Lord, when he says: "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." Psalm 139, 11, 12.

Quest. 47. Are there also attributes in the Lord God which are particularly exercised towards those who fear him?

Ans. Yes, certainly. Just as we have already said before, and as is testified in many places in Holy Scripture; that the Lord God is a gracious, merciful, longsuffering, and meek God, towards all pious and godly persons; who honor, serve and love him; even as we may see and read here and there in Holy Scripture: That he "shows mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments."

Ex. 20, 6. As the Lord himself also exclaimed, (Ex. 34, 6. 7.:) "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." This also David testifies, when he says: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Far as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103, 8. 12.

Quest. 48. May then the pious sin against God's grace, since they know that they have a merciful God?

Ans. No. Since they would in this manner abuse the grace of God, and turn it into lasciviousness, as Jude says in his Epistle, v. 4; and Paul corroborates, Rom. 6, 1. 2.: "What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Quest. 49. How then must the grace, mercy, and goodness of God be understood, so that they may be of use to the pious and godly?

Ans. For the pious and godly, the grace and mercy of God, are the main work; in which

they may have comfort in their pilgrimage and spiritual warfare; for thereby they are supported, if they peradventure err or stumble in their good intention; and without which they would have to despair, when they consider the great demand which God has made on them and all mankind, namely: "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy:" Lev. 11, 44. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5, 48.

Quest. 50. On what does the consolation of the pious rest, in respect of the grace and mercy of God?

Ans. On the unspeakable and unfathomable love wherewith he has loved us, yea the whole world. John 3, 16. And since God is rich in mercy, "for his great love wherewith he loved us." Eph. 2, 4. But the pious, who feel their imperfection, sigh unto their God, for he knows what kind of creatures we are, and "remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103, 14. Especially do they comfort themselves with the words of Peter: That the Lord "is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3, 9. And this then awakens in the pious in their sorrow over their sins, a hope in God's mercy, that they sigh and say: "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation." Psalm 13, 5. And David says therefore in his heart: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my

fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust." Psalm 18, 1. 2. Besides this see the Lord's promise and assurance, made through Isaiah: "That they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," &c. Isaiah 40, 31.

Quest. 51. Is then this faith in and knowledge of the grace, meekness, long-suffering, and mercy of God, serviceable to no others, than merely to those who endeavor to serve and fear the Lord in obedience?

Ans. It is serviceable not only to *these*, but also to those who, like the prodigal son, see the miserable and dangerous condition in which they stand towards God, in respect of their souls, namely, how they abused the "grace and goodness of God, and turned them into lasciviousness." Luke 15, 13. Epistle of Jude, v. 4. And thus feel and be sensible of the burden of their sins, and sigh and speak with David: "Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness." Psalm 38, 4. 5. Yea, and also come with a contrite heart before the Lord, and say: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have

I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Ps. 51, 1—4. "Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and destroy me not in mine iniquities." (Prayer of Manasses.) To those who thus "draw nigh unto God, God will draw nigh;" (James 4, 8.) especially when they follow the counsel which he has given through Isaiah, when he says: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil. Learn to do well." Isaiah 1, 16. 17. Then comes He to meet them whom God the Father hath sent, to call sinners to repentance, and stands with outstretched arms, and says: "Come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11, 28. The sinner coming to God with such lamentation, and also with a contrite heart, and a fixed purpose to reform his life,—is true godly sorrow; which "worketh a repentance to salvation not to be repented of." To such a sinner the door of mercy stands open, as is to be seen, with many particulars, in the case of the prodigal son; (Luke 15.) and "his sins shall be remembered no more." Jer. 31, 34.; Ezek. 33, 16.

Quest. 52. Is then the Lord God not also merciful to impenitent sinners?

Ans. As long as men continue in their profligate, carnal and wicked course of life and conduct, they cannot console themselves with the meekness, grace, and mercy of God; for "there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." Isaiah 48, 22.; 57, 21. "For the wrath of

God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Rom. 1, 18. And this sentence on the ungodly stands fixed: "Wo unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isaiah 3, 11.

Quest. 53. Are then such people called ungodly or *godless*, because God has nothing to do with them, and they nothing with God; and are therefore *godless*, that is, without God?

Ans. They are not called godless, because they are *without* God, or because God has nothing to do with them; but because they are not willing to bear the Lord's easy yoke and light burden, (Matt. 11, 30.) and follow their own will, contrary to the will of God, and pursue their affairs with all kinds of crafty artifices, and without any fear of God, as David says, Psalm 10, 3. 4.: "The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, &c. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Isaiah 57, 20. Therefore David speaks further rightly of them, when he says: "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." Psalm 36, 1. For they turn themselves from God's commandments, as if there were no God.

Quest. 54. Is there then for such people no

more hope of salvation; must they remain banished from the Lord's countenance?

Ans. There is no hope for the salvation of such people, as long as they continue in their ungodliness and wickedness, and reject the counsel of God against themselves; for although they know "the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them;" and are "abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." Rom. 1, 32.; Tit. 1, 16. Therefore Scripture says unto them: "After thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest thou up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds." Rom. 2, 5. 6. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Eccl. 11, 3.

Quest. 55. When we have then come by faith to a knowledge of all these Divine Attributes, should we not then also have a knowledge of the nature of God's Divine Majesty?

Ans. In order that we may honor, love, fear, and serve the Lord God the better, he has, besides the revelation of his acceptable will, (as already mentioned and shown) also revealed to us his Divine Attributes, in order that we may thereby know in what relation he stands to us; but not how he exists in his own Divine Being; for, as this could not be serviceable to the promotion of our salvation, it has not pleased him

to reveal any thing to us about it; that we may not by presumptuous searching and seeking to know his precise nature, commit sin; and as mere creatures, how can we comprehend our Creator? For if the works of man cannot comprehend the nature of their maker, how shall we be able to understand and comprehend the nature of the Great Creator? "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts." Isaiah 55, 9. When Moses desired to see the glory of God, he received the answer: "Thou must not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live;" (Ex. 33, 20.) understand, in his Divine nature; for although God's countenance is mentioned in Holy Scripture, we must not understand this in a natural sense, after the manner of man; but rather in a spiritual sense, as an effect of him towards us; and which is thus expressed to assist, in some measure, our weakness, and to represent and show his operations, but not his precise nature, as no image can be formed of that, as is to be seen in Isaiah 40, 18. 25.: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." Thus the Lord God is and remains, in the nature of his being, to us an incomprehensible God; and although we can see his operations in many things, yet "his understanding is infinite." Psalm 147, 5. And we are obliged to say with Paul: "O

the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. 11, 33. Now if God's judgments and ways are incomprehensible, how much more so is his Divine Being itself!

ARTICLE FOURTH, OF THE UNITY OF GOD.

Quest. 56. Now there has been much said of God; yea also how that he was ONE GOD. Why then is it said by so many, and also at so many places: "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost?" Is then according to such expression, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, even as the Father is God? Why then are the Jews in the wrong when they say that Christians worship and profess three Gods; whereas it is otherwise acknowledged that there is but *One God?*

Ans. We have said and confessed, that not only the Lord God is incomprehensible; but also that his judgments in regard to us are so; therefore the Divine Being of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of God, as they exist in themselves, cannot be comprehended by man, nor expressed in words. For although it is said by some men, that there are three independent persons or beings in the Godhead, and therefore say further: "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost;" yet we do not find such expressions in Holy Scripture; but on the contrary, that the Son and Holy Ghost are united in the same Divine

Being, and that the Godhead is likewise attributed to them; as Christ's own words purport, (John 14, 9.): "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" and, (John 10, 30.): "I and the Father are one."

Quest. 57. But when the Lord God calls himself to Moses, the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," (Ex. 3, 15.) are not thereby three names mentioned?

Ans. The Lord God does indeed confess himself to have been the God of these three persons; but not that he, on his part, consists of three persons; but that he is the God of Israel; and besides *that*, he is the same God that was the God of their fathers; namely, the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" who sent Moses to them, (Israel) and was further now also their God. But this God is not merely a God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; but a "God of the whole earth." Isaiah 54, 5. Not a "God of the Jews only; but also the God of the Gentiles." Rom. 3, 29.

Quest. 58. How then must these three names be understood, of which we read in Matthew 28, 19.: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Ans. From this it must not be understood, that there are three Beings, or three persons, much less that there are three Gods in heaven. But these names are thus differently expressed in consideration of the work of redemption, and the salvation of the human race; as, the Father

the origin, the Son the means of redemption, and the Holy Ghost sanctification and confirmation in salvation; all of which thus happens to us from the perfection of the Great God, Creator of heaven and earth; as Paul says: "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. 1, 21. 22. Now although there are different persons with man; such as father, mother, and son; yet must we not thus talk and judge of God, after the manner of man; for we have proved that he is an incomprehensible God. Hence we should rather understand under these names, "ONE GOD;" as John testifies of the same, (1 John, 5, 7.): "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Of this ONENESS we have also testimony in John 1, 1.: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." As we also read of God and the Spirit, in the account of creation: "That the "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Gen. 1, 1. 2. To which David also refers when he says: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Psalm 33, 6.

Quest. 59. How can it be, that these three, namely, "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," are "ONE GOD;" since it is so clearly written by Matthew, (c. 3. v. 16. 17.)

that Jesus was baptized by John, that the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and lighted upon him, and that a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" where indeed the Son was baptized, the Holy Ghost seen, and the Father's voice heard. Is it not then to be inferred, that there are three Divinities in heaven?

Ans. Were we to view and consider this matter after the manner of man, we would conclude and judge, that there *are;* but this great work of God, which God has, according to his promise, accomplished supernaturally, through his great love and Divine power, cannot and must not be judged and understood in a natural manner; but rather be viewed, believed, and considered, as an incomprehensible work, with high admiration of God and his great, almighty, and inconceivable wisdom. But the person of Jesus Christ was at that time to be seen and felt in his humanity in the flesh; yet as Paul says: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Cor. 5, 19. We must also further confess with Paul: "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. 3, 16. Thus this matter remains to human reason, incomprehensible; even as a father who has a son, is not the son, but the father; so also is the son not the father, but the son of the father; and as the Holy Spirit is a spirit of God and of Christ, so he is neither the Father nor the Son, but the Holy Spirit. But as we

are mere natural beings, and this is supernatural and a work of God, we must view it as a godly mystery, and receive it in faith. Nor should we desire to search into any part of the Divine nature which is incomprehensible to us; as remarked before from Rom. 11, 33.: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

Quest. 60. Have then the Jews no testimony and proof of the "Unity of God" in the Old Testament; since it seems so strange to them, that Christians profess, in the Divine Being, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" through which they (the Jews) alienate themselves still more from Christianity?

Ans. It appears that as long as they adhere so closely to Moses, and the vail remains hanging over their hearts and eyes, they cannot perceive nor understand this matter. Besides this, it does not become them to keep so distant; much less, to speak so blasphemously of the matter in question; inasmuch as there is so frequently mention made of the "Holy Spirit," the "Spirit of the Lord," and the "Spirit of God," in the Old Testament; as is to be seen in the beginning of the description of creation: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. 1, 2. And David says: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." 2 Sam. 23, 2. And again he says, (Psalm 51, 12.:) "Uphold me with thy

free spirit." And Isaiah says in lamenting over Israel: "They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit. Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?" Isaiah 63, 10. 11. And again it is said, (Isaiah 44, 3.; Joel 3, 1.) "I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed," &c.

Quest. 61. Do we then read nothing of the Son of God in the Old Testament; since it appears so strange to the Jews, that we Christians honor Christ as the Son of God; whom they will not accept as the Messiah?

Ans. As they expect a temporal Messiah, such as Moses and Elias, and an earthly kingdom like that of David and Solomon, they remain in unbelief towards the Son of God, Jesus Christ; otherwise they can find testimony enough of him in the Old Testament; as there are the Proverbs of the wise man Solomon: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind into his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" Prov. 30, 4. Of this Son (in the person of God) David also testifies: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Psalm 2, 7. 8. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Psalm 2, 12. Of the Son's unity with God, Isaiah prophecies: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9, 6.

Article Fifth, of the Incarnation of Christ.

Quest. 62. Concerning the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, was he before his birth by Mary, already the Son of God with the Father?

Ans. Certainly was he before his birth by Mary, with the Father, as we have just proved from Isaiah 9, 6. "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. 1, 20. Not only fore-ordained, but existing from eternity; as Micah testifies, (c. 5, v. 2.): "Whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting. Therefore Christ says himself, (John 17, 5.): "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." But Paul writes of the Son yet more explicitly, when he says: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." Col. 1, 15,

16. From this his eternity is sufficiently explained.

Quest. 63. Now since this is so certain and true of the Son of God, that the Father testifies of him: "This is my beloved Son;" why then does Christ so frequently call himself the "Son of man?"

Ans. This is a matter of great mystery, which surpasses all human reason; as it cannot be well comprehended, how it could be, and has also come to pass, that the Great God permitted his son, whom he had conceived from eternity, to be born *man* by a virgin, and yet remain his son; which Paul calls the "mystery of godliness." 1 Tim. 3, 16.

Quest. 64. Has then the Son of God, by his advent into this world, become *that* which he was not before?

Ans. It has pleased God to reconcile the human race to himself by his Son; and thus to destroy and annihilate "sin in the flesh through sin." "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5, 21. And thus he became *that* which he was not before; for the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1, 14. "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness." Rom. 1, 3. 4. That "which

we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." 1 John, 1, 1. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man." Phil. 2, 6. 7. "Was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4, 15. Now for these reasons the Son of God also calls himself the "Son of man."

Article Fifth, of the Fall of the Human Race.

Quest. 65. Why then has the Son of God come into the world?

Ans. Because the first man Adam, who was created by God in his own image, good and perfect, (Gen. 1, 27.) transgressed his command, and thus turned away from him,—he fell under God's wrath and condemnation; and not he alone, but all who have descended from him. (Gen. 3, 1—7.) And thus by one man (Adam) "sin entered into the word, and death by sin; (understand, eternal death,) and so death passed upon all men: and reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Rom. 5, 12. 14. From which no one "can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Psalm 49, 7. "For the judgment was by one to condemnation." Rom. 5, 16.

So that all the posterity of Adam may well say with the pious Esdras: "O thou Adam, what hast thou done! for though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone but we all that come of thee." 2 Esdras, 7, 48.

Quest. 66. Has then the Son of God, Jesus Christ, come into the world to appease, take away, reconcile, and satisfy the wrath of God?

Ans. It was thus the acceptable will of God, according to his unfathomable love and mercy, that he sent his beloved and only begotten Son into the world in the flesh, again to raise and reconcile to himself, the fallen race of man; therefore he is also called in the prophecy of Isaiah, "The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9, 6. For although the "statutes" of Moses had the promise, that these who kept them, should "live in them;" (Lev. 18, 5.) yet this was included under a curse: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." Deut. 27, 26. Now inasmuch as through the weakness of the flesh, no one could keep the law perfectly, all men were "under the curse" and wrath of God. Gal. 3, 10. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8, 3. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous." Rom. 5, 19. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righte-

ousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 5, 21. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15, 22. "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Eph. 2, 17.; Luke 2, 10.; Acts 10, 36. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19, 10. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3, 16.

Quest. 67. Is then the work of our salvation and redemption attributed to the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, alone; because his name is most frequently mentioned, and he is called our Savior?

Ans. It was thus the eternal decreee of God, that he would, through his Son, accomplish the work of redemption, by presenting him as a means for the salvation of man; as is to be seen from the fact, that the angel carried the message to Mary and Joseph, that they should "call his name JESUS;" (Matt. 1, 21.; Luke 1, 31.) because he should "save his people from their sins." Notwithstanding, this salvation did not take place without the Father, but with him; as is to be seen from 2 Cor. 5, 19.; where Paul says: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righte-

ousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1, 30. "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us." Luke 1, 78. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Eph. 2, 4. 5.; John 3, 16.; 1 John 4, 9. 10. And although the work itself is accomplished through the Son, and he is therefore called the "finisher of our faith;" (Heb. 12, 2.) yet the Father must not be excluded therefrom; but we must also give him honor, praise, and thanks therefor; as the angels at the birth of Christ instructed us by their example to do, when they said: "Glory to God in the highest," &c. (Luke 2, 14.) And Paul also says: "Thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1, 12—14.

Quest. 68. Does then saving faith, whereby we believe that there is "ONE GOD," also require of us, that we believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer?

Ans. This must infallibly follow from saving faith in God, who is the Creator of heaven and earth; as we have before proved his (the Son's) unity with the Father; and he himself says:

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me." John 14, 1. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John 3, 36. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4, 12. Indeed this is the foundation of the gospel, the beginning and end of the same. Again it is said: "But these (signs) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20, 31. As Peter also directs his hearers in his sermon (Acts 2, 36,) and Cornelius and his house, (Acts 10, 36.); and Philip the people of Samaria and the eunuch, (Acts 8, 12. 37.) As also Paul and Silas said to the jailor: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," Acts 16, 31.

Quest. 69. Is then faith in God, and his Son Jesus Christ, sufficient for salvation?

Ans. This is indeed the chief article of true faith to salvation, when such faith is well and rightly fixed in the heart according to scripture, and influences the whole man: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 10, 10. But as the question is here more particularly asked, whether such faith alone is sufficient to salvation,—we must again say, that a mere oral confession that we have

such faith, is not sufficient to salvation; but much more a faith whereby we willingly take upon ourselves the cross of Christ, and thereby show by the fruits of our faith, that we have a "faith that worketh by love." And that we also give all diligence to have our faith accompanied by the christian virtues of "knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity." 2 Pet. 1, 5—7. For if we have not these virtues with our faith, but merely make an oral confession of God and Christ, such confession can help us nothing to our salvation. "For he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off." 2 Pet. 1, 9. Of which James also speaks: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2, 20. 22. 26. For faith is not without works, that is, such works as please God; as was shown by Abraham in reality. Therefore James may well say with Peter, that a "man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

Article Seventh, of Good Works.

Quest. 70. Now since good works along with faith, are so necessary; as faith without them is good for nothing; does man merit any

thing with God to salvation, with his good works?

Ans. Just as faith must be firm and constant, if God is to be pleased therewith (Heb. 11, 6.); so must the christian virtues and good works be firm and constant in love, if we hope to be saved; as we have before shown from 2 Pet. 1, 9. And in Matthew 25, 42. 43. it is plainly to be seen, that works must accompany faith to salvation. And in v. 34. Christ says: "Come, ye blessed of my Father," &c., and then names each one's reward according to his works, (v. 35—41.) And in John, (c. 5, v. 29.) he says: "They that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life," &c. As is also to be seen, Phil. 2, 12.; 1 Cor. 15, 58. As however the question is asked, whether man can do any thing towards God to merit his salvation, it is to be observed, that he cannot; as we would thereby make God our debtor. For although salvation is promised on good works, at different places in Holy Scripture, this has reference to such works as are produced by faith, love, and obedience; but it is not to be understood, that heaven may be earned thereby. For it is said: "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17, 10.

Quest. 71. Must we then, while we desire and strive for eternal salvation, practice no christian virtues, and do no christian works; since Paul

nevertheless promises eternal life to those, (Rom. 2, 7.) "who by patient continuance in well doing," seek after it?

Ans. In the practice and proof of our faith, our mind and striving must always be directed towards eternal life; as the needle of the compass points to the north; as Christ says: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Luke 13, 24. And this from the beginning unto the end of faith and life; which Paul also clearly indicates, when he says: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." 1 Cor. 9, 24.; 15, 58. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3, 14. Again Paul says: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." Rom. 2, 7. Thus the first and the last, the doctrine and ministry of the gospel, is: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Phil. 2, 12. And according to the words of Christ: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Matt. 10, 22. So Paul also testifies, that this in his whole career was his aim, when he says: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. 4, 8. Thus the course of the Christian must be in striving for eternal life. (2 Pet. 1, 11.) "For we are his (God's)

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2, 10. To this purpose are also the words of Christ, when he says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I give them eternal life." John 10, 27. 28.

Article Eighth, of the New Covenant, or New Testament.

Quest. 72. Must then all believers, who hope to be saved, be obedient to the voice of Christ, as their lawgiver, and follow his doctrine and example?

Ans. This we must do from the whole heart, and not merely with the mouth; as is clearly to be seen from many testimonies in Holy Scripture, as well in the Old Testament as in the New; as also from the promises and their fulfilment. As the prophet Moses says: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Deut. 18, 15.; Acts 3, 22. "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people: a leader and commander to the people." Isaiah 55, 4. For "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Heb. 1, 1. 2. And not only by him, but also of him, from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Matt. 3, 17.; 17, 5.; 2 Pet. 1, 17.

Quest. 73. Does then the Old Testament not serve us any more for doctrine; since our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come into the world, and we are commanded to hear and follow him?

Ans. The external ordinances of the Jewish law given by Moses, in which there were all kinds of ceremonies, which the Jews were commanded to observe in their Divine Service, are not to be observed any more by Christians; as they were shadows and types of the sacrifice of Christ and his royal priesthood, in which the promise of God of the coming of Christ, the salvation of the human race, and what the prophets prophesied of the same, are declared; given us as an assurance and strengthening of our faith in the Son of God; who by his coming and sacrifice has become "the end of the law." Rom. 10, 4. For through his suffering, death, and sacrifice, all the ceremonies of the law came to an end; as he said at the close of his suffering: "It is finished." (John 19, 28, 30.) Namely, all that was promised to the fathers, typified in the ceremonies of the law, and predicted by the prophets, according to the words of Christ, Luke 18, 31.; 24, 26. 46.; 1 Cor. 15. 3. 4.

Quest. 74. Does then the Ceremonial Law, or the customs commanded and taught in the Old Testament, still concern us; so that we should conform as much to them as to the doctrine of Christ and his apotles?

Ans. Yes. For all that the holy men of God

have taught, has been brought forth by the Holy Spirit, and written for us as doctrine, (2 Pet. 1, 21.) as well as that which the apostles have written; for Christ says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Matt. 5, 17. And all that the two tables or ten commandments, and the doctrine of the prophets, contain,—remains as the chief work of the New Testament, namely, the law of the love of God, and of our neighbor; for "on these two commandments (says Christ) hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. 22, 40. Upon which the apostle Paul has founded his doctrine for all Christians, when he says: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 2 Tim. 1, 5.

Article Ninth, of the Christian Church or Communion.

Quest. 75. Now since the Ceremonial Divine Service distinguished Heathenism from Judaism; which latter in its time, comprised the people of God, the temple of Jerusalem being their house of worship, and consequently their centre of communion; in what then does the Church of God now consist; so that they who belong thereto, may be considered as, and called, the people and children of God?

Ans. Of this the Lord himself hath spoken through Jeremiah, as also through Ezekiel: "I

will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them : and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore." Ezek. 37, 27. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel : After these days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jer. 31, 33. But now this new covenant is the gospel of God the Father, which has been proclaimed through his only beloved Son, as also through his disciples ; for "God, who at sundry times and divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Heb. 1, 1. "For so God loved the world, (understand, the whole human race,) that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3, 16. So that it may now be said : "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1. 15. As was prophesied before through Isaiah, (c. 49, v. 6.) : "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Thus the Son of God became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Heb. 5, 9. Through such faith then believers became God's people and children of God in the Communion and Church of Christ. Gal. 3, 26. ; Rom. 8, 16.)

And this Son of God is set by the Father as the head over the church, according to the words of Paul, Eph. 1, 22.; Col. 1, 18. 19.; Isaiah 55, 4.

Quest. 76. Will then the Lord Jesus, as the head of the evangelical church or communion, govern, protect, superintend, and lead the same *alone;* as the head does the other members of the body; or as the man is the head over his wife and children?

Ans. Since the Son of God has been chosen, ordained, and confirmed thereto by the Father, (Matt. 28, 18.) he has not only shown himself as the head and ruler of his members; but also went before them as a leader, with the pattern of his life; gave them commandments and interdictions, besides the guidance of his Spirit in holy truth, for their preservation to eternal life; as he says himself, (John 10, 27.): "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give them eternal life." John 10, 27. 28. And, (Matt. 11, 29. 30.): "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lonely in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Further, (Matt. 28, 20.): "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

ARTICLE TENTH, OF THE DEACONS AND MINISTERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OR COMMUNION.

Quest. 77. Has then the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, also appointed persons in his Church, and over his Communion, as Superintendents, Deacons and Teachers?

Ans. Yes. He has appointed several overseers to serve his church and communion in his bodily absence; to teach his members the doctrine, commandments, and ordinances left by him; as also to preach the gospel, to which he himself appointed several in the days of his incarnation, whom he called apostles, (Matt. 10, 1—3.; Luke 6, 13—15.) and sent them forth to proclaim the gospel, as he did also at his ascension, with a declaration of his power to do the same, when he says: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations," &c. Matt. 28, 18. 19.; Mark 16, 15. Thus has God the Father, together with his Son, for the edification and improvement of the church—according to the testimony of St. Paul—appointed "some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the edifying of the body of Christ." 1 Cor. 12, 28.; Eph. 4, 11. 12. Which body is the Church of Christ.

Quest. 78. Is this still thus performed by the Father, and Christ the Son, without the means or co-operation of man?

Ans. Just as the Lord God, together with his

spirit and word, has always effected the salvation of man through the external co-operation of man, and in the first Book of Kings, (c. 19, 16.) Elias is commanded to anoint Elisha in his stead as a prophet; so it still pleases God to do the same under the Gospel Dispensation; as is to be seen from Christ's own words, when he says: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Matt. 9, 37, 38.; Luke 10, 2. Thus the chief work of obtaining men for God's harvest or field of labor, is ordained by the Lord, and received from him through prayer; but besides this, the members of the church are to look for such men as fear God, are lovers of the church and of divine truth; and are thus good examples in doctrine; as Luke testifies of Christ, (Acts 1, 1.) where he alludes to his having written all that Christ did and taught. Thus we see that the first church and apostles did as above remarked, when they wanted to ordain an apostle in Judas' place; that is, they looked to fitness, prayed God, and said: "Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part in this ministry," &c. Acts 1, 24. And this Peter observed faithfully, being commanded before all others to feed the flock of Christ. And Paul, the "chosen vessel" of the Lord, observed the same thing, when he writes to Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of

me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." 2 Tim. 2, 2. "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." 1 Tim. 3, 9. And together with a blameless life, such men must also have a good report, not only of those within the church, but also "of them which are without;" so that their office be not blasphemed. 1 Tim. 3, 7.; 4, 12. Such men must then continue in their ministry, and minister according to "the ability which God giveth." 1 Pet. 4, 11. And not "neglect the gift that is in them, which was given them by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." 1 Tim. 4, 13—16. Who do not feed the flock of Christ with the design of temporal gain, neither for the fleece nor the milk—"not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. 5, 2. 3.

Quest. 79. Must then the teachers not be maintained by the church; that is, receive pay for their service; or must they labor to maintain themselves; do as the apostle Paul did; who labored day and night, "that he might not be chargeable to any?" Acts 18, 3.; 20, 34.; 1 Cor. 4, 12.; 2 Thes. 3, 8.

Ans. In the choosing of evangelical teachers, and those who devote themselves to the office of such, all temporal designs must cease; on the contrary, the welfare and good government of the church, and the honor of God, must be kept

in view. And he who is thus chosen, must, on his part, accept and act in the ministry out of love to the utmost welfare of the church; thus devoting himself to the service of God and the church, according to the example of Paul. Gal. 1, 16. If he has however opportunity to maintain himself and those entrusted to his care, he is to follow the example of Paul, as he (Paul) testifies of himself: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20, 35. As otherwise, if one resorts to the ministry for the enjoyment of temporal gain, it has more the appearance, that he is seeking improper gain, than that of the fruit of love and affection; which is otherwise required. 1 Pet. 5, 2. 3. For the striving for temporal gain, renders a minister unworthy before God, and soon unfit for his ministry amongst men.

Quest. 80. Must then such ministers receive nothing at all from the church for their service for the maintainance of themselves and those entrusted to them; but must maintain themselves?

Ans. If with such the design of temporal gain is not the motive of their ministry; but that they devote themselves thereto out of love, and serve with the gift and "ability which God giveth;" in such case the church is bound in love, on her part, to provide for their necessities; for if a minister serves the church out of love and cordial affection, the church is, according to the words of Christ and the doctrine of

Paul, under obligation, and not out of mutual love, in duty bound, to provide for him according to his necessities: for thus teaches the latter, (1 Thes. 5, 12. 13.) in these words: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves." "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." Gal. 6, 6. And of himself he says: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things." 1 Cor. 9, 11.

Quest. 81. Thus then a minister may receive pay for his service, if he stands in need of it; since Christ says: "The laborer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10, 7.

Ans. If pay is demanded by the minister for his service, there is no more room for love; but it is to be feared, that by such an one the flock is fed for the sake of the fleece and milk; as the Lord God complains of such, (Ezek. 34, 2. 3.) "Woe be to shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherd feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock." Which militates against the words of Christ, (Matt. 10, 8.): "Freely ye have received, freely give." But if a minister, in his superintendence of the church, performs his duty faithfully before the Lord, then the church also has its duty

to perform towards the minister, and indeed each member for himself. But when Christ says: "The laborer is worthy of his hire," this has reference to the duty and obligation of the church and those who receive his service; and that they shall do this to their minister as a reward for what he has done for them. As Paul also compares it, (1 Cor. 9, 7—14.; 1 Tim. 5, 18.:) "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." And to this also Paul has reference, when he speaks of the duty of members: "That they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Quest. 82. But how can it be reconciled, or how does it agree, when Christ says: "The laborer is worthy of his hire;" and Paul says: "The Lord hath ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel;" and yet Christ says: "Freely ye have received, freely give." Do not these things militate against one another?

Ans. They do not militate against one another, and can well be reconciled, if it only be considered under what sense and intention each of them was spoken; and that on all sides, love should be exercised and have the precedence. For one treats of the teacher and his duty; the other of the hearers and their duty. Now when these matters are on all sides judged of rightly, they can easily be reconciled. But if the teacher will continually insist upon the duty or obligation of his hearers, and wants to have observed towards him what is recorded in Matt. 10, 10.;

1 Cor. 9, 14.; but on the other hand forgets his duty, which he is to perform out of love, and not for the sake of gain; and again when the hearers insist upon the teacher performing his duty towards them, but forget their own:—In such case the work of love will be at a stand, become fruitless, and be eventually extinguished. But where people act and continue honestly in love, they do not seek their own advantage, but that of others: they seek what is for the promotion of their neighbor. 1 Cor. 10, 24.; 13, 5. And when the words, Matt. 10, 8.; Ezek. 34, 2. 3.; 1 Pet. 5, 2. 3.;—are properly understood and considered, it will be clearly seen, that they concern the teacher, and not the hearers. But concerning the words, 1 Thes. 5, 12. 13.; Gal. 6, 6.; 1 Cor. 9, 11.;—which concern the hearers, it is to be remarked, that when they are observed without reluctance, it goes well in the church, and love may abide; and whatever else may appear at variance, may be reconciled.

Quest. 83. What kind of a service in the church is that, whose members are called assistants and governors?

Ans. This is a service, whose members dispatch all cases concerning the welfare of the church that do not concern the ministerial service; and who have a particular oversight over the poor, over widows and orphans, and over aged, frail, and infirm persons; so that no one suffers want: who consequently receive the given alms into safe-keeping, and distribute them

among the needy; as we read that Peter says: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we appoint over this business." Acts 6, 2. 3. From which service honorable aged women are also not to be excluded, (1 Tim. 5, 9. 10.; Tit. 2, 3.) but are to perform such service in their sphere, and particularly amongst their own sex.

Article Eleventh, of the Entrance into the Church or Communion.

Quest. 84. Can we become members of the Communion or Christian Church thereby, that we believe the gospel; as also, that there is a God, who sent Jesus Christ; or must yet more be done, if we will become members of the Church or Communion?

Ans. Faith in the gospel—which testifies of God and his Son Jesus Christ—is the beginning or first stage of entrance into the Church of Christ. But in order to become a member of the same, a sound conversion and an entire change of life must take place. For it is said: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1, 15. As was manifested in many, who—(when Peter and other apostles preached the gospel to them at the day of Penticost, whereby their hearts were touched, that they said: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?")—received the answer: "Repent," &c. Acts 2. 37, 38. As

also the words of Christ show, (Luke 24, 46. 47.) when he says: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." Which is also testified by Paul, (Acts 17, 30.) when he says: "The times of ignorance God winked at; but now he commandeth all men every where to repent."

Quest. 85. What kind of a work is repentance? and what use is there in it that one does repent?

Ans. True, evangelical repentance—a repentance that is valid before God—is no small or insignificant matter, but a great one; inasmuch as the pardon of sins is promised thereon. It consists in two points: 1. In a true knowledge of God and his Divine attributes. 2. In a knowledge of our own dangerous condition. For without a true knowledge of God and his holy will, and a knowledge of our inability to fulfil the same, there is no pardon of sin to be expected. On the contrary, if any one will obtain the favor of God, he must see his sinful condition; how he has, like the prodigal son, abused his heavenly Father's "goods" and mercy, and turned them "into lasciviousness." Jude 4. Through which twofold knowledge he will, with David, "have respect unto the Lord's ways." Psalm 119, 15. Besides, he will "behold the goodness and severity of God." Rom. 11, 22. And how the "goodness of God leadeth him to repentance." Rom. 2, 4. Thus repenting, and say-

ing with a deep sigh in his heart: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Rom. 7, 24. So that he does under the burden of his sins, with David, "go mourning all the day long." Psalm 38, 6. In such a condition, man has come to a knowledge of himself, and is far advanced in repentance and sorrow for his sins.

Quest. 86. Is it then no true and full repentance, when we repent of and mourn over our sins?

Ans. To have a knowledge of our sins, and to repent of them before men—to say that we are sorry for them—is not yet true, yea scarcely a half repentance. True repentance—a repentance that will be valid before God—must be shown and attested by a contrite heart and heart-felt sorrow before God; so that we speak sighingly before him: "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned: and done this evil in thy sight." Psalm 51, 3. 4. Saying also with the prodigal son: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Luke 15, 18. 19. And with Manasses: "I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned; and acknowledge mine iniquities: wherefore I humbly beseeeh thee, forgive me, and destroy me not with mine iniquities."

Quest. 87. Is it also no full and true repent-

ance, if we repent of our sins, mourn over them, and pray God for pardon?

Ans. Although this is the chief part of repentance, still it is no full repentance, unless it is connected with a holy resolution to forsake sin and amend our lives. For this is the purport of the ground and foundation of the entrance into the christian church, laid by Christ: "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 4, 17. Of which amendment of life, Solomon also speaks very properly when he says: "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy." Prov. 28, 13. And not only confesses and forsakes them, but also puts them wholly away from him; as God speaks through Isaiah, (c. 1, v. 16. 17.): "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment." And James says: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." James 4, 8. 9. On such the Lord will look in mercy, as he speaks through Isaiah: "I will look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isaiah 66, 2. "Wherefore come out from among them, (understand, out from among the ungodly,) and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and

will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6, 17. 18. Thus going on from stage to stage, is a repentance that is valid before God; as we have thereby the promise, that though our "sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1, 18.

Quest. 88. When then a person has come to the faith, and also to true repentance and amendment of life, through the ministry and the reading of the word of God: what more remains for him to do; so that he may become a member of the church, and have a mind at rest for himself?

Ans. When a person is in possession of true and saving faith, so that he believes that there is a God, and also "that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,"—with such a person faith does not stand still; but goes on from stage to stage; from virtue to virtue; and from commandment to commandment; such person showing a filial obedience in every thing that may be serviceable to his soul's salvation; so that the words, Rom. 6, 17. fully apply to him: "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." This proof of obedience is then a willingness, to take upon ourselves the yoke of Christ; as he calls all penitent hearts unto him: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and

I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. 11, 28. 29. And this is the free, open "fountain for sin and for uncleanness," (Zech. 13, 1.) to which the apostles directed all afflicted and anxious souls of men; as did Philip, the eunuch, (Acts 8, 35.;) Peter, Cornelius and his house, (Acts 10, 36.;) and Paul the jailor. (Acts 16, 31.)

Article Twelfth, of External Water-Baptism on Faith.

Quest. 89. What then is required of man in the gospel, to show his obedience, when he takes upon himself the yoke of Christ?

Ans. The first proof of his obedience is, that he submits to the commandment of Christ, and becomes baptized on his confession of faith; as is to be seen, Matt. 28, 19. 20.: "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" as was done with many at the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem, after hearing the sermon of Peter; so that all who gladly received the words of the apostles were baptized. Acts 2, 41. So the people of Samaria, when they believed the preaching of Philip, who preached to them "concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, were baptized both men and women." Acts 8, 12. Further, the eunuch, (Acts 8, 38.;) Cornelius and his house, (Acts

10, 48. ;) the jailor, (Acts 16, 33.) Yea, Paul himself, after he was taught and instructed by Ananias. (Acts 9, 18.) So that baptism is a work that properly belongs to faith and true repentance.

Quest. 90. In what respect then is Christian Baptism serviceable to believing and penitent persons? Are they also benefited thereby?

Ans. Christian external water-baptism implies that it is a commandment of God, given by the Son of God, and that it is conducive to the benefit of man in various respects, if it is received with a sincere heart, and the obligation which it imposes properly observed.

1. It signifies the burying of the old man of sin, according to the words of Paul, (Rom. 6, 3. 4.) when he says: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

2. It signifies the pardon, washing off, and absolution of sin; for thus said Peter to the contrite hearts at the day of Pentecost: "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2, 38. And Ananias to Paul: "Brother Saul, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Acts 22, 13. 16. Through which is represented the purification which takes place through the blood of Christ; as is to be seen from the words of Christ, Matt. 26, 28.; Col. 1, 14.; 1 John 1, 7.; Rev. 1, 5.

3. The fulfilling of "all righteousness," according to the declaration of Christ. Matt. 3, 15.

4. "The answer of a good conscience toward God." 1 Pet. 3, 21.

Quest. 91. Is it also stated in the gospel, to whom baptism is to be administered? or are some excluded therefrom?

Ans. This question may be answered in a two-fold manner; namely, that baptism must be viewed in a general and also in a particular manner. The law of Moses was given for the children of Israel alone, and not for the gentiles; as David testifies when he says: "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation." Psalm 147, 19. 20. But the law of the gospel is given for all men, without distinction of Jew or heathen. Matt. 28, 19.; Mark 16, 15. Circumcision was also only commanded to be performed on the male sex, and not on the female. Gen. 17, 10. On the contrary, baptism requires no distinction, not even between men and women; as is to be seen in the case of the people of Samaria. Acts 8, 12.; 16, 15. As also in the case of those who were baptized at the day of Pentecost; and that of the heathen centurion Cornelius. Acts 10, 47. 48.

Quest. 92. Is then baptism of so general a nature that it should be administered to all men; even as it is said of the gospel, that it should be preached to every creature? Mark 16, 15.

Ans. In the administration of baptism, as in the functions of the ministry, no distinction is made; but all those who are of a capable understanding to give ear to the words of the ministry—who can be taught—and who can also receive the doctrine of the gospel in faith, and thereby become fit subjects for baptism—after embracing the same by repentance and amendment of life—all such may be and have been baptized; as is shown above from Acts 8, 12.; 10, 47. 48.; 16, 15. For all the persons here alluded to—after the gospel was preached to them, and they were exhorted to faith by repentaace and amendment of life, and received the gospel—were baptized. And although children belong to the human race, yet we cannot see—either from the command of Christ, from his doctrine, nor from the practice of the apostles—that baptism becomes them, or that they were baptized. And why not? Because they have no ears to hear, nor hearts to understand. Matt. 11, 15.

Quest. 93. May then by virtue of the command of Christ, as also according to the doctrine and practice of the apostles, no children be baptized?

Ans. We cannot see that the command of Christian Baptism extends to small children; and we do also not find in the whole New Tes-

tament, that the apostles in their ministry spoke to children; much less that they baptized such. Further, we cannot see, that children are or can be possessed of that which is represented by and required in baptism. For young children are not capable of receiving the doctrine of the gospel, nor have they committed any sins of which they can repent, or of which they can amend their lives; much less can they receive any matter of faith, or believe in Christ Jesus; as Paul plainly speaks of the acceptance of faith: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" And then confines faith to hearing, and hearing to the word of God. Rom. 10, 14. 17. So also Moses testifies of children, (Deut. 1, 39.): "That they have no knowledge between good and evil." Yea, the Lord himself testifies of them, that they "cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand" Jonah 4, 11. And we also daily see of children, that if they are in the greatest danger of fire and water, they by no means know how to save themselves from them; thus showing that they live in complete innocence, and without any knowledge of things about them.

Quest. 94. Now since evangelical Christian Baptism should only be administered on faith, repentance, and amendment of life,—why then do some baptize infants, although these have not the said qualifications?

Ans. They do this on account of Original Sin, which according to their declaration, has

come on all men through the fall of Adam; and this they endeavor to prove from the words of Paul, Rom. 5, 12—14. To which Paul however adds, that through the death of Christ, they were reconciled,—the charge of original sin being taken away—and does consequently not rest any more on children. Rom. 5, 18. 19. Others who baptize infants, defend the practice from the will and discretion of the parents; as also from the practice of the old Roman Catholic Church: thus baptizing their children on the faith of the church, and making them, as they think, members of the same.

Again others hold baptism as a sign of the covenant, through which children become united with the church, as their parents are. And as circumscision was a sign of the covenant, so, on the contrary, baptism was ordained and instituted as a like sign.

Others again want to prove from Heb. 11, 6. that children have faith, if they are born of christian parents—it being "impossible without faith to please God:" also from the words of Christ, when he says: "Suffer little children and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19, 14. From this they conclude, that if the kingdom of heaven belongs to them, they must have faith, or else they could not please God; which they also infer from Matt. 18, 6. where Christ says: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that

a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Quest. 95. How is it possible that there are so many different opinions amongst those who baptize infants, since they are agreed in the matter itself—their being so much misunderstanding as to the ground on which they administer baptism: is it not proper that we should have, in a matter of so much importance, a clear and express command, and a firm ground?

Ans. As far as we are concerned, we will not judge those who believe in infant baptism on account of their opinions; but will leave them to answer to God themselves for the practice of such baptism. But we for our part, cannot in the least agree with any of them; for we hold ourselves bound in this matter, to follow the express command and order of Christ; as also the doctrine and order of the apostles, as before said; by whom the command is established, first to teach, and then to baptize those who have believed. As we see that the apostles every where followed this command, but do not find that they baptized children. Therefore we believe this chief command, not from inference, or probable evidence, but from the infallible word of the holy gospel; so that we can say to the candidate for baptism with Philip: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And here the words of Christ are in place: "Teach all nations, baptizing them. He that believeth

and is baptized, shall be saved." Thus we see that doctrine and faith go before baptism.

Quest. 96. Is it then only men and women that are to be baptized, as is testified and shown of the people of Samaria? Acts 8, 12.

Ans. It must not be merely men and women; for the command concerns all nations; it being said: "Preach the gospel to every creature;" that is, to all mankind. The law indeed concerned chiefly men; particularly the Ceremonial Law. But the gospel concerns all mankind, who have arrived at the age of discretion, and a knowledge of good and evil—whether they are married or unmarried—and who have ears to hear and hearts to understand the conditions of it, according to Matt. 11, 29. Who voluntarily take upon themselves the yoke of Christ to follow him, and who—from the hearing of and faith in the gospel—say with the eunuch: "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Acts 8, 36. Who thus feel themselves impelled to yield to the requisitions of the gospel; as did the people at the day of Pentecost. For those who gladly received the words of Peter, were baptized.

Quest. 97. Is there then a certain age appointed at which people are to be baptized, as the Lord God had appointed the eighth day for circumcision; or, as many think, that Christ was baptized in his thirtieth year?

Ans. In respect of the administration and reception of Christian Baptism, we do not find

any certain age appointed, at which a person is to receive it, as in the case of circumcision. Nor do we read that Christ was baptized at the age of thirty years; but indeed that he was still considered as a son of Joseph when he was about that age. Luke 3, 23. Thus we see that the baptism of the gospel is not confined to any certain age; but rather, that it depends on the emotion of the human mind; that is, that a person should receive it when he finds himself convinced and impelled by the power of the living word of God to yield obedience to God and Christ; at the same time amending his life, and believing the gospel. Mark 1, 15. Now when a person has come to this state, then is the proper time for him to be baptized "for the remission of sins;" as Peter exhorts, Acts 2, 38.; and Paul remarks that Ananias directed him to do. Acts 22, 16.

Quest. 98. Are men's sins pardoned and washed off through baptism?

Ans. The sins which men do, are not washed off by external baptism, as this is literally expressed by Ananias; else it would be necessary to practice this continually, as was done under the law with the sin offering. For if any one sinned against the law or became impure, he had to sacrifice, purify himself, and become reconciled to God. But for this purpose baptism is not instituted—to apply it at any time for the purification of sin. (Heb. 9, 22. 23.) So Peter also says in respect of baptism, that it is

"not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." 1 Pet. 3, 21. For after we have received baptism "unto repentance" and amendment of life, on faith in Jesus Christ, the same secures unto us the pardon of sins committed; which takes place through the precious blood of Christ—the free and open "fountain for sin and uncleanness," of which Zechariah prophesied, (c. 13, v. 1.) and whereby he signifies the death of Christ:—"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1, 14. So that it is not water in baptism, that has the power and efficacy to take away sin, and cleanse men from it. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1, 7.

Article Thirteenth, of the Fruits and Works of Faith.

Quest. 99. Now if we have received Christian Baptism on faith, knowledge of sin, and pardon of the same; is this sufficient to salvation; or must yet something more be done in order to be saved?

Ans. Yes. For baptism binds the person who believes in Jesus Christ, and is baptized, to different things, as well in temporal as in spiritual matters, as these matters are comprehended in the gospel; that is, to observe and

give proof of the doctrine of the gospel. For after the Lord Jesus had commanded his disciples to preach the gospel to all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"—he also added: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28, 19. 20. To this Paul also refers when he says: "Know ye not, that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. 6, 3. 4. So Paul also exhorts, (Phil. 2, 12.): "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Quest. 100. Now since baptism, on faith in Jesus Christ, is not sufficient to salvation, but there must be, as I perceive, yet something more done; in what then does this consist, or what may it be?

Ans. Yes, certainly, there must be yet something more done to obtain salvation; namely, that we bring forth fruits of faith as a good tree in the vineyard that does not "cumber the ground." Luke 13, 7. Yea, that we may be found as fruitful grafts—grafted into the spiritual olive-tree Jesus Christ; as Paul teaches, Rom. 11, 24. For such Christ himself calls fruitful branches in him—who is the "true vine." John 15, 5. And of all such it is re-

quired, that they "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called." Eph. 4, 1. Yea, as good trees, that bring forth fruits worthy of conversion; who give as much diligence as possible to excel in good works. Tit. 3, 1. 8. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," says Paul, Eph. 2, 10.; Tit. 2, 14. Consequently there must be—with such—a total conversion and change of life. "For as they yield their members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now they must (after their baptism) yield their members servants to righteousness and holiness." Rom. 6, 19. To which the words of Christ also refer, when he says: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5, 16.

Quest. 101. What is intimated to the candidate for baptism at the reception of the same, when he is "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Ans. A great deal; and this comprises the chief articles through which salvation has been effected for him, and without which no salvation could have been obtained.

1. That God the Father is the origin from which the means of salvation are prepared and bestowed upon him. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotton Son, that

whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3, 16. To which Paul also refers when he says: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col. 1, 12. 13. "But God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Eph. 2, 4. 5.

2. That he is baptized on his faith in the name of the Father, and has received the adoption of the sons of God; as Paul says: "For ye are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." Gal. 3, 26. So that he has free access to the Father, and may address him in his prayers: "Our Father which art in heaven," &c. Matt. 6, 9. To which consolation Paul adds: "If we are children, then heirs; heirs of God: and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. 8, 17.

Quest. 102. What does the name of Son show the candidate for baptism in the reception of the same?

Ans. 1. That the Son of the living God is the means of his salvation. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4, 12. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1, 14. And not only so; but he is also through the Son redeemed

from the power of hell and death. Heb. 2, 14. So that he can say: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15, 55—57.

2. That Christ is his mediator and advocate with the Father. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2, 5. And on the strength of this, John comforts the faithful members of Christ when he says: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John, 2, 1.

Quest. 103. What is effected for the candidate for baptism, thereby, that he is baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost?

Ans. 1. It shows unto him, that the Holy Ghost was a co-worker in the Divine Being, along with the Father and the Son, in the accomplishment of his salvation.

2. That he shall further abide with him as his comforter. John 14, 16. 17. Which "Spirit beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God;" (Rom. 8, 16.) having thus, if he walks like a faithful child, the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries, "Abba, Father." Rom. 8, 15.

3. It is especially serviceable to the strengthening of all such in their pilgrimage, that they will—according to the promise of Christ—be

guided by the Holy Spirit "into all truth." John 16, 13.

Quest. 104. Should it claim the particular attention and consideration of such candidates for baptism, that they are "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?"

Ans. It necessarily claims the consideration of such, that through the holy appellation and reception of such baptism, they have become the adopted of God, as they should also consider themselves to be; as Paul says: "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6, 19. 20. And again he says: "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto God, which is your reasonable service. Rom. 12, 1. Thus "showing what manner of spirit they are of." Luke 9, 55.

Article Fourteenth, of the Lord's Supper, or Breaking of Bread.

Quest. 105. Is there any thing important and particular in the gospel, for persons baptized, to perform, as a chief commandment and precept of Christ?

Ans. The Lord Jesus has commanded all the members of his church or communion to observe his (the Lord's) Supper, which he has instituted with bread and wine, and also observed

himself. For in the last night when he was betrayed and ate the last passover with his disciples, "he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Luke 22, 19, 20. "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. 26, 28. And the holy and highly enlightened apostle Paul, sent out by the Lord Jesus to preach the gospel of God, (Rom. 1, 1.)—after testifying how he received the command for observing the Lord's Supper—adds: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. 11, 26.

Quest. 106. Was then the Lord's Supper also observed to his remembrance, by the Church, after his death?

Ans. Yes. For it is clear and evident, that the same was taught by the apostles in the primitive church, and observed by the believers of that time, as we read: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers; and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Acts 2, 42. 46. So we also read that the believers at Troas met on a Sabbath "to break bread," when Paul passed that way, and that he then served

them with the same. Acts 20, 7. 11. But as it was observed in a disorderly manner by the Corinthians, Paul reproved them on that account, and told them that they did not observe it as instituted by Christ, but to their own prejudice. He therefore represented to them the proper manner of observing this Sacrament, as he had "received of the Lord;" as is amply to be seen, 1 Cor. 11, 18—29.

Quest. 107. Does it then stand so well with believers, that if they are baptized on their faith, and observe the Sacrament (Lord's Supper) or the breaking of bread externally, that they can console themselves with the hope of eternal life?

Ans. Just as external baptism alone brings no salvation; unless we do that on our part, which is required of us in the gospel; so can the external rite or observance of the Sacrament, not save the person baptized, if he does not endeavor also to fulfil his christian calling, as is required of the faithful children of God. Therefore the apostle Paul, when representing to the believers at Corinth the observance of the Sacrament, enjoins, that each one before partaking of the same, shall examine his life and conversation—as to how he stands with God and his neighbor in respect of the same. He says: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Cor. 11, 28. 29.

Quest. 108. Were it not better to abstain from partaking of the Sacrament, so as not to partake of it to one's own damnation; since people are so frail and fallible; yea, frequently commit sin before they are aware of it?

Ans. Not to partake of the Sacrament, or to neglect the same, from such a view, or from such thoughts, would be done more from contempt for the command of Christ, than from the fear of God, and might easily be an occasion for continuing in sin. But if we seriously take into consideration the command of Christ, and thereby find ourselves bound to the observance of the Sacrament, it will incite us the more powerfully to give strict heed to our life and conversation—to avoid sin—and bring our faults the more earnestly before the Lord—and to pray for the pardon of our sins; and thus the observance of the Sacrament will be serviceable to our comfort and pardon through the merits of Christ; since Christ says in his word: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Luke 22, 20.; Matt. 26, 28. But to continue knowingly and wilfully in sin, and to abstain from partaking of the Sacrament; thereby thinking to get clear of God's just punishment, is rather more a proof of wickedness, than of the fear of God. For he who from contempt neglected to keep the passover amongst the Israelites, did not go unpunished. (Num. 9, 13.) Much less will he go unpunished, who despises the com-

mand of Christ. And although those were not to keep the passover who were, according to the law, unclean; yet was the condition annexed, that they had to purify themselves, and keep the passover on "the fourteenth day of the second month." And he who did not do this was to be "cut off from among his people." Num. 9, 11—13. Thus the command of Christ is established, (Luke 22, 19.): "This do in remembrance of me." So also Paul teaches, 1 Cor. 11, 28.): "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Which teaches that we are not to stand still in this work, but to continue in it. If we then find ourselves, by examination, not pure before God, but guilty of something, we must first become reconciled to God and our neighbor, and then "eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

Quest. 109. Are then the bread and wine of the Sacrament, the real body and blood of Jesus Christ; since they are so called by Christ, and it is so strictly declared by Paul, that "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself?"

Ans. The Lord Jesus in instituting his Supper, indeed speaks of them (bread and wine) as such, namely: "This is my body; this is my blood." Matt. 26, 26—28.; Mark 14, 22—24. This declaration however—that the external bread and wine of the Sacrament are the real body and blood of Christ—must not be liter-

ally understood; but in a spiritual and mysterious sense; as is to be seen from the conversation of Christ with the Jews about the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood. John 6, 54. 55. As this was however literally understood by the Jews and many of his disciples, he said: "The flesh profiteth nothing: the words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6, 63. So we are also to understand the words of Christ about the institution of the Holy Sacrament, in a spiritual sense; and therefore he concludes the matter with the words: "This do in remembrance of me." Luke 22, 19. The same language is also twice used by Paul in reference to such bread and wine, as follows: "This do in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. 11, 24. 25. And since the apostles, whenever they speak of the Sacrament, call it the "breaking of bread," (Acts 2, 42. 46.; 20, 7. 11.; 1 Cor. 10, 16.; 11, 23—26,) it cannot be understood by us as the real body and blood of Christ; but must be understood in a spiritual sense, as a holy sign of the body and blood of Christ; as Paul also calls and represents it, 1 Cor. 10, 16.

Quest. 110. Now if the said bread is merely common bread; such bread as we use for food, how then can we eat it unworthily, to our own damnation?

Ans. Although the passover of the Jews consisted merely of the flesh of lambs, such as was eaten by them otherwise; yet no one that was

uncircumcised—no heathen nor Jew that was according to the law unclean—was permitted to eat thereof. Such were not permitted to eat thereof, 1. Because it was an institution of the law. 2. Because it consisted of meat set apart for the worship of God. 3. Because it was to be kept as a memorial of their (the Jews') deliverance from Egypt; when the "destroyer" passed over their houses, and spared their first-born. And 4. Because it brought to their minds the knowledge and remembrance of the Divine favors shown to their ancestors, and that it was a command given by God, as already remarked. Now then since the passover was expressly set apart for these purposes, it was a matter of God, and sacred in his sight; and therefore it was also to be kept sacred by the Israelites, and partaken of in purity. And thus we are also to understand the matter of the breaking of bread at the Sacrament; namely, that it is to be observed, first, on account of its being commanded by Christ; who instituted it in memory of his sufferings and death, and enjoined it as a holy ordinance; and that it is therefore also to be considered by us as holy, and thus observed. 2. Because it (the breaking of bread) represents and signifies to us—for the proper, separate observance of the same—such dear and precious things, of the sacrifice of Christ, the breaking of his body, the shedding of his blood on the cross for our reconciliation with God, the pardon of our sins and our preservation to eternal life.

Wherefore it is proper that we should observe and regard it—in the fear of God—as holy. Even as it is called by Paul, "The communion of the blood of Christ," when he says: "The cup of the blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10, 16.

Quest. 111. Are there yet more such comparisons and expressions in Holy Scripture, where to external things the name of divine things is given, and whereby it is shown that the words of Christ about the bread and wine of his supper, were spoken in signification of his body and blood?

Ans. Holy Scripture is full of expressions which signify internal, divine, spiritual, and heavenly things; and which things are denominated by the names of external things, which represent and show to us divine, spiritual, and heavenly things. Thus Christ calls himself the "door of his sheep," and says: "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep;" (John 10, 7. 11.) the "true vine;" and believers "the branches;" (John 15, 5.) "the way;" (John 14, 6.) his Father the "husbandman," and Peter a "rock." And Joseph said to Pharaoh in explaining his dream, that the seven "good kine" and the seven "good ears," were "seven years of plenty;" and the seven "ill-favored kine" and "seven empty ears," were seven years of famine. (Gen. 41, 26—29.) Likewise did he

say of the dreams of the chief butler and chief baker, that the "three branches" and the "three baskets" were three days. (Gen. 40, 12—18.) So they also saw and experienced themselves what their dreams signified. Further, David calls the water which the "three mighty men" fetched at the risk of their lives, at the gate of Bethlehem, and from amongst their enemies, the "blood of the men," and "poured it out unto the Lord." (2 Sam. 23, 16. 17.) As Paul also speaks of the two wives of Abraham, and their two sons, Isaac and Ishmael: "Which things (he says) are an allegory;" namely, that they signify the "two covenants." Gal. 4, 24. Thus he also speaks of the rock which Moses smote in the wilderness, and from which water issued; that this "rock," namely, was Christ. (1 Cor. 10, 4.) Now these things are called *that* which they signify; and such expressions there are in great abundance in Scripture.

Quest. 112. Must then the Sacrament be only observed in memory of the death and sufferings of Christ?

Ans. The Lord God not only commanded the children of Israel to eat the passover, and to celebrate the feast of the passover, in memory of their deliverance from Egypt; but also to renew the memory of the faithful fulfilment of the promise given to their fathers; thereby reminding them of the favors of God; as the Lord remonstrated with them through Micah, when they had in a great measure ceased to regard

these matters, when he says: "That ye may know the righteousness of the Lord." Micah 6, 5. Thus must also the observance of the Lord's Supper not serve us merely as a common memorial of the death and sufferings of Christ; but should remind us particularly of God's great love and favors shown to us; inasmuch as he has bestowed unto us such a precious passover; namely, Christ, the beloved Son of God, who has been sacrificed for us; (1 Cor. 5, 7.) thereby showing that we are reconciled to him, and consequently have obtained peace with him through Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5, 1.) Further it should remind us of what has been effected for us through the advent of Christ, as well as through his doctrine, example, suffering, and death, in order that we may thereby remember his great love; through which we are so dearly bought; as Paul says: "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6, 19. 20.

Quest. 113. Does the observance and usage of the Lord's Supper serve as a memorial and knowledge of the great favors of God, conferred upon us through Christ?

Ans. It serves all pious and godly persons in many respects, as a consolation, as a strengthening and encouragement in their pilgrimage; as also as an assurance, that

1. The Lord's Supper is left to them as a testament; as also that the sufferings and death

of Christ redound to the pardon of their sins and the restoration of eternal life.

2. That just as they partake of bread and wine in the Holy Sacrament, so they shall also partake of Christ and his merits; as Christ says in a parable: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." John 6, 51. 55. 56. Therefore Christ sets the cup of his supper before believers as a testament left by him, when he says: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Luke 22, 20. In whom they also have a faithful assistant, who watches over them like a shepherd over his flock. (Psalm 23, 1.; Matt. 28, 20.)

Thirdly and lastly, it represents to all believers the unity of the spirit, which they have with one another through the unity of faith, and the hope of salvation, conferred upon them by Christ; wherein they are through this ordinance, all *one;* provided they show the unity of the spirit, as Paul says: "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. 10, 17.

Quest. 114. Is there also a set time when and how often the Lord's Supper is to be observed

by the church, as was the case with the passover amongst the Israelites?

Ans. God had appointed the children of Israel a certain time when they were to observe the passover; namely, according to their year, on the fourteenth day of the first month. (Exodus 12, 6.) But as it regards the Lord's Supper, we find no fixed time when and how often it is to be observed by the church; there being no such time appointed in the primitive church; which is evident from Acts 2, 42—47., where it is said: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer. And breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." And at Troas it was, in consequence of an accidental visitation of Paul, observed on a Sabbath evening. (Acts 20, 7—11.) However it is well to be observed, that as often as we partake of this Sacrament, we "shew the Lord's death till he comes." (1 Cor. 11, 26.)

Article Fifteenth, of the Commandment of Love.

Quest. 115. Has the Lord Jesus, besides Baptism and the Sacrament, yet also given other high commandments to his Church, which were not given under the Old Testament Dispensation?

Ans. The Lord has indeed given some such commandments; but none that abrogate the

chief commandments of the law of Moses: but such indeed as make said law more perfect and binding. For Christ says: "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." Matt. 5, 17. But particularly is this to be observed in reference to the commandment of love, which is the chief commandment: yea, the whole substance of the law of Moses; namely: To "love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our might." Deut. 6, 5. Further, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Lev. 19, 18. "On these two commandments (says Christ) hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. 22, 40. That is, that we should well stand the test of these commandments, and walk in perfect love; and that in the exercise of such love, all that is contained in the law and the prophets is fulfilled; as Paul testifies: "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. 1, 5.

Quest. 116. Where and how is the commandment of love made and cited more perfectly by Christ, than it was in the law of Moses?

Ans. Under the law of Moses, the love of our neighbor was not understood to extend farther than to their brethren, the Israelites; who alone were considered as neighbors. Under the gospel however, "brotherly love and charity" (general love) are required. (2 Pet. 1, 7.) For Christ says: "If ye love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the publi-

cans the same?" Matt. 5, 46. And when a "certain lawyer" asked Christ, who, according to the law, was his neighbor, he made to him the comparison about the Samaritan; (Luke 10, 29.) thereby declaring unto him that he was to exercise love towards all those who stood in need of his help; whereby he teaches, that not only he who was his brother according to the covenant of circumcision, was his neighbor; but that we should show our labors of love, without distinction, to all those to whom we can be of service. At the same time he also enjoined brotherly love as strictly as it was ever commanded in the law, and said to his disciples: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13, 34. 35. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." 1 John 4, 8. Therefore Peter also so strictly and earnestly enjoins love, when he says: "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." 1 Pet. 4, 8. And not only "brotherly kindness," but also "charity;" that is, love towards all mankind; (2 Pet. 1, 7.) yea, also towards our enemies. (Matt 5, 44.)

Article Sixteenth, on Revenge.

Quest. 117. Is there then in this doctrine of showing love towards all men, without distinction, nothing contrary to the law; since the

Jews had to fight against their enemies through the hand of the Lord; whom the Lord God gave into their hands: how then must a christian act in this matter, when he is to show love towards all men?

Ans. It pleased God at that time to exterminate the seven different proscribed nations, who were his enemies, through the Jews; with whom the latter were not permitted to enter into any treaty of peace, nor their children into marriage relations. (Exodus 34, 12. 16.) Otherwise they had to show love towards all strangers in their country. (Exodus 23, 9.) But now that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;" (2 Cor. 5, 19.; 1 John, 2, 2.) our benevolence must be shown to all men, without distinction, according to the words of Peter; (2 Pet. 1, 7.) as is also expressly taught by Christ: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the

publicans so?" Matt. 5, 38—47. In a similar manner the apostle Paul exhorts believers, when he says: "Dearly beloved, revenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Rom. 12, 19. 20. Thus must orthodox christians through well-doing, silence the ignorance of unwise and foolish men.

Quest. 118. Has true love—the love required in the gospel—also certain signs, whereby it may be known?

Ans. Certainly has that love which extends to all mankind, also certain signs. For wherever the true love of God is founded in the hearts of men, they are also enkindled in love towards their fellow creatures. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." 1 John, 2, 9. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." 1 Cor. 13, 4—6. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13, 10. Thus a true christian is, through love, free from all desire of revenge.

Article Seventeenth, on the Swearing of Oaths.

Quest. 119. Are there yet more such matters to which Christ alluded—and which are practised by worldly governments—but are forbidden in the law of Christ?

Ans. It is also a plain commandment of Christ, that in testimony about disputes about temporal matters, we should not swear an oath, which is otherwise customary under worldly governments, but which is no commandment of the law; there being however a commandment in the law, that we "shall not swear falsely." (Lev. 19, 12.) The swearing of oaths was however customary among men from the time of Abraham; as is to be seen in the case of Abraham himself; who took an oath from his servant. (Gen. 24, 2. 3.) And Isaac bound himself by an oath to king Abimelech in a treaty of peace. (Gen. 26, 31.) So also Jacob and Laban confirmed their "covenant" by an oath. (Gen. 31, 53.) Now since the swearing of oaths is no commandment of God, and matters of truth can be as strongly attested without an oath, as with it, Christ directs his people, whose calling it is to "speak the truth in love," (Eph. 4, 15.) to pursue the shortest and safest way of truth. He says: "Ye have heard that it has been said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you: Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's

throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matt. 5, 33—37. From this it is to be seen, that the Lord Jesus does not merely abolish and forbid that which was adopted by man without commandment; but that he at the same time forbids *that* which the law mentions about "swearing falsely," and also directs how we can testify to the truth without swearing; as also that his testimony was founded on the fact, that he did not "come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." Matt. 5, 17.

Article Eighteenth, on Matrimony.

Quest. 120. Are there yet more things changed, or made perfect, by the Lord Jesus, which are also mentioned in the law?

Ans. Concerning the state of matrimony, Christ made amends for the abuses and decline which had crept into it in consequence of being suffered under the law of Moses, and also reproved them. Of which God also complains—that men acted in this matter contrary to his will. (Mal. 2, 14. 15.) Further, Christ also again brought the first state of matrimony to its primitive order. For when he was asked by the Pharisees, whether it was "lawful for a man

to put away his wife for every cause?" he answered: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh? What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Matt. 19, 4—6. And when the Jews again asked: "Why did then Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" Jesus answered: "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Matt. 19, 7—9. From this it is clearly to be seen, that Christ teaches all christians, that a man (except in case of fornication,) is bound to his wife by the band of matrimony, as long as she lives, and that the wife is also bound to her husband by the same tie as long as he lives. "But if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." 1 Cor. 7, 39.

Quest. 121. Are then all marriages made by the Lord, as the words of Christ purport?

Ans. As God is an omniscient God, and his actions are incomprehensible to man, we cannot

come to a settled conclusion about this matter. But if we take into consideration the providence of God, we must confess, that there are also persons united by God in matrimony, who enter into this state for their mutual punishment; or who must be a punishment to others thereby; as is to be seen in the case of Sampson, whose marriage became an occasion of punishment to the Philistines. (Judges 14, 1. 2.) So we also see how married people frequently live to the punishment of each other. But where the true fear of God exists with people, there we may be assured that he is the author of marriage; for "great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Psalm 103, 11. And of this Abraham was assured, when he sent for a wife for his son Isaac; and not knowing who she would be, he said to his servant, who was in such matters considerate and cautious: "The Lord shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son." Gen. 24, 7. Now when the servant met her, he turned to God in prayer; and when Laban understood the message, he said: "The thing proceedeth from the Lord: we cannot speak unto thee, bad or good." Gen. 24, 50.

Quest. 122. Are there also means whereby we may come to such a state of marriage, and whereby we may be assured, that the Lord God has appointed a consort for man?

Ans. There are indeed means whereby we may be assured, that we have come to the matrimonial state by the direction of God, if we

only fear the Lord, (Psalm 103, 11.) as was said to king Asa: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him." 2 Chron. 15, 2. "A good wife is a good portion, which shall be given in the portion of them that fear the Lord." Ecclesiasticus 26, 3. Of which we have an example in the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when we observe how they feared God, and how through the means of prayer they obtained the consorts appointed for them by the Lord. For "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears open unto their cry." Psalm 34, 15. So we also see that Jacob prayed God to be with him on his journey, when for the purpose of obtaining a consort, he moved from his father's house to Mesopotamia. (Gen. 28, 20.) "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." James 5, 16. And the apostle John says: "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." 1 John 5, 14.

Quest. 123. Is not every one at liberty to enter into a state of matrimony with whom he pleases?

Ans. The faithful christian is not at liberty to do so. But the wholesome doctrine of the gospel—when properly observed by him—will direct him how to act in this matter. But that it is not pleasing to God, that men should enter into the matrimonial state according to the dictates of their carnal minds, is to be seen from the marriages before the flood. For it is said:

"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they choose." Gen. 6, 2. So were also the children of Israel—who were otherwise called the people of God—expressly forbidden to intermarry with the sons and daughters of the land of Canaan, whom the Lord had proscribed. So we are also not permitted to marry those who are too nearly related to us by consanguinity. Lev. 18, 6—18. Beyond these exceptions, however, we are at liberty to marry whom we please; only so that—according to the admonition of Paul—it be done "in the Lord." 1 Cor. 7, 39. That is, that those, who intend entering into the state of matrimony, do so in prayer and in the fear of God. Under these conditions then, they are at liberty to marry as they please: the rich to the poor, the old to the young, widows to the single; that is, if such persons are free in their conscience from others, and are of the same religious faith, and attend the same worship.

Quest. 124. May then not persons—men and women—join themselves together of their own accord, without this being done by a minister of religion?

Ans. All intimate connexion between men and women without the bond of matrimony, is called fornication; about which we have a command in the law of Moses: "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel." Deut. 23, 17. There-

fore Paul also says: "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." 1 Cor. 7, 2. Also: "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Heb. 13, 4.

Article Nineteenth, of Ecclesiastical Punishment, or Excommunication.

Quest. 125. Now if any member of the church peradventure transgresses any of these commandments of Christ, or acts contrary to them, is there also some punishment ordained by the church for such transgression?

Ans. If such transgression takes place wilfully—out of contempt for the commandment—the person so transgressing, is disobedient to the gospel. (Rom. 2, 8.) Particularly so, if his course of life is such, that he thereby gives others occasion to speak evil of the same, and the doctrine of the gospel is thereby blasphemed. But the conduct of such person is to be examined into from different points of view: whether it consists of faults, errors, or intentional and voluntary sins and transgressions, with or without repentance; as also with the difference, whether the offence exists between him and God, or between him and his brother or neighbor. Now if such offence is only the consequence of an error, or an over hasty action, whereby the erring person overstepped the bounds of his calling, such matter may be made

good again by a brotherly admonition, exhortation, and instruction, and repentance on the part of the offender, according to the doctrine of Paul: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6, 1. "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Rom. 14, 1. So Sirach also gives an instructive admonition in referring to evil reports, when he says: "Admonish a friend, it may be he hath not done it: and if he have done it, that he do it no more. Admonish thy friend, it may be he hath not said it: and if he have, that he speak it not again. Admonish a friend: for many times it is a slander, and believe not every tale." Ecclesiasticus 19, 13—15. And when this is done in love, it may be serviceable to much good; and thus it behoves us to do—according to the doctrine of Christ—when one brother sins against another, for Christ says: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church." Matt. 18, 15—17.

Quest. 126. Must we then proceed and act differently with those who sin against God?

Ans. In such case we must proceed with caution, and well distinguish, whether the sins committed are such against which damnation is pronounced in Scripture, or whether they are such as may be atoned for through repentance; or whether the offender proves himself obstinate, and continues in his wicked course of life, as Paul says of such: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Rom. 2, 5. Now in such case—in such transgression of the commandments of Christ—in consequence of which the church is evil spoken of from those who are "without"—the sentence of the church must—according to the instructions of Christ—be pronounced against such offender; and if there is no heart-felt repentance and sorrow for sin—no desire to avoid evil—observable in such person, he must be cut off from the church as a dead and unfit member, and swept out as a leaven; and, according to the instruction of Christ, be considered "as a heathen and publican." Matt. 18, 17. And so also Paul writes: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump." 1 Cor. 5, 6. 7. "For what have I to do, to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." 1 Cor. 5, 12. 13. "Them that sin

rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." 1 Tim. 5, 20. 21.

Article Twentieth, of Excommunication or Exclusion from the Church.

Quest. 127. Now if such persons as before alluded to, are punished by the church, for their wicked and unchristian course of life, is this done merely for the terror of others?

Ans. It is not done merely as a terror to others, and as an example of the punishment of sin; but also as a warning to the offender, in order to bring him—according to the commandment of Christ and his apostles—to repentance and amendment of life. So it is also to serve as a declaration, that the church will not suffer itself to be blasphemed on his account, by others, or by those "without." Therefore such person is to be so far shunned, that he has nothing more to do in the church and its communion; yea, that he is not recognised by the brotherly kiss or salutation; no more so, than one who never was connected with the church, until the time of his conversion, his amendment of life and conversation.

Quest. 128. How are we to conduct ourselves towards such, so long as they are without the pale of the church?

Ans. If they still adhere to the church, hear the word of God, are no blasphemers and abusers—in such case we are diligently to exhort them again to become reconciled to God and the church; and in as far as we see that they are in earnest, we are to reach them the helping hand to their restoration; nevertheless, this must be done with great caution and foresight; namely so, that the offender does not fall in too great sorrow; and that we do not act against God's will in such case. But when the person thus excluded from the church, still continues in vice, sin, and shame, and there is no hope for his amendment, we must refer such case to the just judgment of God; but for all *that* perform God's commandment towards him; that is, show and exercise christian love towards him as towards our neighbor. Matt. 5, 48.; 19, 19.; 22, 39.; Mark 12, 31.; Gal. 5, 14.; 6, 10.

Article Twenty-first, of the Re-reception of the Penitent.

Quest. 129. Now if such a person as above alluded to, has, through proper reproof and exhortation, come to conversion and amendment of life, how is he then to be dealt with?

Ans. In such case the church is bound to show cordial love and sympathy for him; and out of joy at his return, to encourage in him the hope, that if he continue in his good intention, he will again be received as a member of the church of Christ, and become united to the

same; as is clearly shown in the parable of the lost son, when Christ says: "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke 15, 10. So it behoves us, according to this, again to receive such an one with joy; as Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him." 2 Cor. 2, 6, 7.

Quest. 130. Has then civil government no power to inflict punishment in the Christian Church; or is such government not recognised in the doctrine of the gospel as a legitimate authority?

Ans. The office of such government consists in the administration of temporal affairs, and is not abrogated by the gospel; and although such government does not appear to be instituted by Christ in the evangelical church, (Luke 22, 25. 26.) yet believers are taught and commanded in the gospel to be "subject unto the higher powers;" for Christ says: "Render therefore unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's; and unto God the things which are God's." Matt. 22, 21. But in *whatever* concerns spiritual and divine things, "we ought to obey God rather than man." Acts 5, 29. For Christ himself is appointed as the head of the church; who prescribes rules, privileges, and laws for the same; which are—according to the word of God—to

be administered spiritually; as shown before from Matt. 18, 15—17; and as Christ further declares, (Matt. 16, 19.): "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Quest. 131. Is there also testimony in Holy Scripture of such great and heinous sins, of which it may be understood, that they are bound in heaven, and are damnable, if people die therein?

Ans. Such testimony we have in abundance; yea, also very clear testimony, how that God is displeased with a carnal and sinful course of life; as Paul mentions at different places—as for instance in Rom. 1, 29—32.; 8, 6. 7.; at which latter place he says: "To be carnally minded is death, and enmity against God." And in 1 Cor. 6, 9. 10. he says: "Neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." So it is further said of others of a similar character: "That they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" understand, such as continue in such a course of life; as Paul further testifies, when he says: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8, 13.

Article Twenty-second, of the Office of Civil Government.

Quest. 132. Are there not also many sins amongst the afore-mentioned which are punished by the civil law; whereby the delinquent may also be condemned to death; how then is the church to act in such case?

Ans. There are two different kinds of laws; namely, a spiritual law, and a worldly law. The spiritual law is the Scripture, written as the word of God; which is to be used in the church —in all cases—as a guide or rule, to distinguish between good and evil. He that is spiritual, "compares spiritual things with spiritual." "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4, 12. If therefore any matter in the church is adjudged according to the word of God, the persons appointed to judge the same, do not adjudge such matter according to their own understanding; but the word of God speaks the sentence, which convinces the heart of the sinner, that he is guilty before God, and that he deserves such punishment. "For true and righteous are his judgments." Rev. 19, 2. But the sentence of the church, which is passed upon the sinner, according to the word of God, is not intended for his destruction, but for his amend-

ment—for the "destruction of the flesh, (that is, the destruction of the lusts of the flesh) that the spirit may be saved," (1 Cor. 5, 5.;) that such person may again be converted and saved; as the word of God speaks of such sinners. Isaiah 1, 16—18. Ezekiel 18, 21—23.; Luke 15, 32. And from the sin from which the sinner is loosed through his re-reception into the church, "he shall also be loosed in heaven." Matt. 16, 19.

Quest. 133. By what authority then, do civil judges and civil governments judge criminals, if this is not done according to the sense of the gospel?

Ans. The civil laws, according to which criminals are judged, and many of them condemned to death, are not founded on the doctrine of the gospel; but they are such laws as were in part given by God to the children of Israel under the Old Testament dispensation; otherwise, such as were given by rulers high in authority, or by wise men for the welfare and in behalf of their countries' subjects; and were consequently ratified by kings and emperors, and other high authorities, for the peace and tranquillity of their countries and cities; as also for the punishment of the bad and protection of the pious. Wherefore Peter also exhorts all faithful christians in the following language: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the

praise of them that do well." 1 Pet. 2, 13. 14. And when the apostle Paul stood bound before the judgment, in consequence of the envy of the Jews—although he was free from every crime—he "appealed unto Cesar," as the head of the highest worldly authority at that time. Acts 25, 11.

Quest. 134. Have then civil governments the power to make laws, whereby judges may judge men, yea even condemn them to death?

Ans. "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Rom. 13, 1. 2. As also Daniel says: "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings." Dan. 2, 21. So did also the Lord Jesus Christ himself, submit to the paying of tribute money, and commanded to "render unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's." Matt. 22, 21. "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." Rom. 13, 5. 6. So that we are in duty bound, for the Lord's sake, not merely to "be subject unto the higher powers;" but also—as Paul teaches—to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks"—not only for men in general—but also "for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and

peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." 1 Tim. 2, 1. 2. "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.—Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom is due; fear to whom fear is due; honor to whom honor is due." Rom. 13, 4. 7.

Quest. 135. Must we then submit and be obedient to civil government in all things; and if so, how then can we at the same time follow the law of Christ and the government; since they frequently militate against one another?

Ans. Since civil governments derive their power from God, it is evident that they also depend on God; therefore we must regard the commandments of God more than those of worldly governments. Consequently, whenever the commandments of worldly authority militate against those of God, the latter must—according to the example of the apostles—have the preference. For when they (the apostles) were forbidden to preach any more in the name of Jesus, they answered: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Acts 4, 19. Therefore it also behoves us to obey God above all things, without which we cannot—agreeably to our faith, and according to the example of Paul—have a good conscience before God. For Paul

says, he "exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Acts 24, 16. Thus, whatever we are in duty bound to do towards civil government, according to the words of God, *that* we should willingly do; but not *that* which is contrary to the word of God, and militates against it.

Quest. 136. But if government would insist upon having its commands observed and executed, or else attach punishment to non-performance, how would we have to escape or resist the same?

Ans. All that we could do against such proceedings would have to be done in all meekness and discretion. We would have to entreat government in such case, not to burden our hearts and consciences; stating that it was not from any evil design that we refused yielding obedience to its commands; but from fear of acting against the commandments of God, which we were not permitted to do. But should our prayer not be regarded, then we would have rather to suffer every thing that God would permit to be done unto us, than to yield obedience in violation of our conscience, and act contrary to the commandments of God. Yea, in such case we would have to consider well the words of Peter, when he says: "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." 1 Pet. 2, 19. But if our sufferings should be too grievous to be borne, or

we should not be tolerated on account of not yielding the demanded obedience, then Christ directs us as to the ways and means we are to adopt, and how we are to act in such case; namely, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." Matt. 10, 23.

Quest. 137. Is the state of the christian of such a nature, that he is to bear every thing that a worldly government and unreasonable men may do unto him? And if so—is not then his calling a hard one? And how do the words of Christ agree therewith, when he says: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light?" Matt. 11, 30.

Ans. Such thoughts and imaginations arise from the weakness of the flesh, and from human nature; and as long as these have the upper hand in a person, it is very hard for him to suffer all things which may come in his way. But where the love of God reigns in the hearts of men through the power of saving faith, there the Lord is their strength and vital power; so that they fear no misfortune that may befall them on account of the testimony of his word. Psalm 27, 1. For their hearts are firmly fixed in the Lord; so that they may well say with David: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Psalm 73, 25. 26. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord

delivereth him out of them all." Psalm 34, 20. For this reason also the life of a christian is called a warfare, in which he must spend his days "like a hireling." Job 7, 1. Wherefore Paul also exhorts to "fight the good fight of faith;" (1 Tim. 6, 12.) and thereby to "rejoice in hope; to be patient in tribulation; to continue instant in prayer." Rom. 12, 12. For where evil is endured and wrong suffered for conscience' sake, there the pious soul is "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" (Eph. 6, 10.) and can thus by meeting his adversary by "well-doing," "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." 1 Pet. 2, 15. For "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. 16, 7.

Quest. 138. Now if striving and suffering are the duty of christians—striving in the faith like Job—on what then does their hope rest, and on what is it founded?

Ans. That striving thus is the calling of orthodox christians, has already been fully mentioned; in which their Lord and chief has gone before them, for he says: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; for the servant is not greater than his Lord." John 15, 20. "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." Matt. 24, 9. "Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God a service." John 16, 2. Therefore he also says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross

daily and follow me." Luke 9, 23. For "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven." Acts 14, 22. Now since the highly enlightened apostle Paul—as a faithful follower of his Lord in this warfare, and as a pattern of all the faithful—has testified this in the foregoing quotation—namely, that we must thus enter into the kingdom of God;—this gives good encouragement—is even a great comfort in this life; so that we may well say: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8, 18. Namely to us, who "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4, 17. 18. "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." 1 Pet. 2, 21. For the ground on which our hope rests, is the word of the Lord, which, as Paul says, "was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15, 4. And this was also the comfort and protection of the prophet Jeremiah, in all his sufferings; for he says: "Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jer. 15, 16. And David expresses himself in a similar manner, Psalm 119, 92.; and Paul says: "We know that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experi-

ence, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed." Rom. 5, 3—5. Now although the pious are tried through many sufferings, yet "is their hope full of immortality;" (Wisdom of Solomon 3, 4.) so that they can say: "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. "Rom. 14, 8.

Article Twenty-third, of the Resurrection of the Dead.

Quest. 139. Shall then pious and orthodox christians, who thus strive "through faith," never die; while, nevertheless, the contrary is seen and certified—it being "appointed unto man once to die." Heb. 9, 27.

Ans. In Holy Scripture there are two different lives, and two different deaths spoken of; and we must therefore distinguish in what manner the righteous does not die; since it is said, Heb. 9, 27. that "it is appointed unto man once to die;" as it is also manifest that all men—the pious as well as the wicked—are subject to natural death, and have to die; as Solomon says: "The wise man dieth as the fool." Ecclesiastes 2, 16. For although Adam lived 930 years, Methusalah 969, Noah 950, Abraham 175; and many pious people lived to a great age; yet was the end of them all: "And they died." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15, 22.

Quest. 140. Is there then yet also another

death, except the natural death; and another life, except the natural life?

Ans. Undoubtedly there is yet another death, except the natural death; and as also another life, except the natural life. For natural death must be preceded by a spiritual death, (a death unto sin) if we will otherwise come to that state in which we shall—as the wise man says—"Never die." In which spiritual death, (death unto sin) we remain naturally alive, but come thereby to a state in which we die in the Lord, and yet live afterwards, and never die; that is, if we die unto our worldly lusts, thereby that we crucify and mortify our carnal affections and lusts, which "war against the soul," as Paul says, Rom. 6, 11: "Recken ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And Col. 3, 3. 5.: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. 5, 24. Such can then say: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. 1, 21. Thus men can die unto sin, and live unto God. And if they die a natural death—according to the decree of God—as far as their bodies are concerned, they go the way of all the earth; but as it concerns their souls, they go from this temporal and toilsome life to an eternal and happy rest. "For their works do follow them." Rev. 14, 13. "He

(the righteous) shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." Isaiah 57, 2. Thus we see that we must not understand under natural death, eternal death. That there is however also another life after this natural life, is proved from the words of Christ, when he says: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11, 24.

Quest. 141. Shall then the pious—who first die a spiritual death (a death unto sin) and then also a natural death—only live again, but the wicked remain in death?

Ans. Not only the pious—after having laid off this temporal life, or died a natural death, and are buried—shall again be raised, and made alive; but also the ungodly. For since all the descendants of Adam have fallen under the power of death, through one man's—Adam's—sin, although they "have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" so also through one man, Christ, comes the resurrection of the dead. Rom. 5, 12. 14.) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15, 22. Of this also Daniel testifies in the following words: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. 12. 2. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust." Isaiah 26, 19. And Christ himself says: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all

that are in their graves shall hear his (Christ's) voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5, 28. 29. So Christ also says to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life." John 11, 25. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John 4, 9.

Quest. 142. How can this come to pass, that the dead, who are mouldered in the earth, can again arise and live?

Ans. The precise nature of how this will come to pass, is not necessary for us to know; much less to search into it. That it will however come to pass through the power and might of God, is abundantly revealed to us; as David testifies, when he says: "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest: Return ye children of men." Psalm 90, 3. And Job says: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." Job 19, 25. From this it is evident, that the resurrection of the dead can and will take place through the omnipotence of God, although this may appear to our understanding, strange, and even impossible. But what is impossible with man, is possible with God. For just as the Lord God created every thing out of nothing; so he is also able to reanimate, and again to put together, the decayed body of man, and that with

a single word; as is to be seen in the case of Lazarus. John 11, 43. 44. As also the Psalmist mentions, (Psalm 90,) when he says: "Return, ye children of men." And as we also further read in Ezekiel 37, 10. So also Paul speaks of this matter as follows: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thes. 4, 14. Besides this, however the apostle Paul does in some measure relieve our wonder, by comparing the resurrection of the dead with the seed in the ground; as is to be seen, 1 Cor. 15, 35—38 So he also treats somewhat of the natura of the resurrection in the same chapter, (v. 42—44.) He says: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

ARTICLE TWENTY-FOURTH, OF THE LAST JUDGMENT AND ETERNAL LIFE; ALSO OF ETERNAL DEATH.

Quest. 143. Now since mankind have a like ingress into the world, and a like egress out of it, will it then also be so with the resurrection of the dead?

Ans. No. For although the resurrection shall take place in like manner, yet will the consequence be unlike; as a great difference will be made in regard to the lives which men have led in

this world; for while one will be banished from the presence of the Lord, and excluded from heaven, the other will be received into the favor of God: that is, into heavenly and eternal glory. Matt. 25, 40. 41. Further, the day here alluded to—the day of judgment—will come to pass as Malachi prophesies, (Malachi 4, 1. 2.): "The day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." So Daniel also says: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. 12, 2. And all this is confirmed by Christ himself. John 5, 29.; Matt. 25, 32. 33.

Quest. 144. Is the time also known when this shall come to pass, or when the day of judgment shall come?

Ans. The precise time or hour of this day is not revealed or made known to us in Holy Scripture; but indeed the certainty and nature of it. For when the disciples asked the Lord Jesus: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" he put them in mind of different preceding signs of war and of darkness in the sun, moon, and stars; as also of many other

tribulations; but said the "end was not yet." Now since no one knows any thing of the day and hour of this day; yea, not even the angels in heaven, but the "Father only," (Matt. 24, 36.) who "hath put in his own power the event of this day;" how then should sinful and frail man imagine through his presumption, to have found out, by peculiar wisdom, the time of this awful event; and thereby—like Martha—"trouble himself with many things," and yet forget the "one thing needful." Therefore Christ commands us to "watch and be ready," like those servants who wait on their master, not knowing when he "cometh." Mark 13, 35. So Paul also testifies, (1 Thes. 5, 1. 2.) saying: "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." And Christ himself says, (Matth. 24, 22.): "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

But how, or in what manner, the Day of the Lord will come, is predicted in Matt. 24.; as it was also previously by the prophets; for Joel, for instance, says: "The day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness; for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible." Joel 2, 1. 2. 11. On which day —as Peter says—"The heavens shall pass away

with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." 2 Pet. 3, 10. 11.

Quest. 145. Shall it then, on that day, be revealed, how men lived during their lifetime, and what they did; and shall they at the same time be judged thereby?

Ans. It appears clearly, that every one will receive his reward according to his works. Now since all men are, through the gospel, called, exhorted, and urged to repentance and amendment of life, but many live in a state of disobedience thereto; therefore "God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts 17, 31. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil." 2 Cor. 5, 10. Therefore Christ also exhorts: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13, 33. "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that

shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21, 35. 36. For which reason Paul also writes to the Romans as follows: "Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Rom. 2, 4—9.

Quest. 146. How or in what manner, shall then the judgment be held, and sentence pronounced?

Ans. This is circumstantially described by Matthew, (who received the same from the mouth of the Lord Jesus,) in the following words: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from

the foundation of the world. But to them on his left thand he shall say, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25, 31—41.

Quest 147. What will then properly be the great difference in the condition of the said parties, when each of them shall have gone to the place to which it will be doomed ?

Ans. There has already been much said about the circumstance, that those who are disobedient to the truth—the gospel—shall be doomed to hell, to dwell with the devil and his angels; where there is prepared for them, disgrace and wrath, tribulation and anguish; yea, "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Yea, that they "shall be cast into a furnace of fire; where there shall be wailing and knashing of teeth;" (Matt. 13, 42.) where the "smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever." Rev. 14, 11. As is to be seen in the representation of the rich man. Luke 16, 25. Yea further, that they "shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Rev. 21, 8. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark 9, 44—48. But where they "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Rev. 20, 10. This is indeed a dreadful end of the ungodly, who were during their lifetime disobedient to the gospel.

Quest. 148. What shall, on the contrary, be the ultimate condition of the pious, when they

shall have come to the place allotted them after the judgment?

Ans. For them there will be perpetual glory; yea, an overgreat rejoicing, and ever sweet joy and rest. Besides being in the presence of the Great God and the Lord Jesus Christ; as also in the company of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; yea, of all the holy men of God, and surrounded by a great host of angels—thus being in everlasting joy at the "right hand of God," where "there are pleasures forever more." Psalm 16, 11. Yea, in a state of happiness, which the apostle Paul says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. 2, 9. Yea, where "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb of God which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7, 16. 17. Thus are the pious to be with the Lord to all eternity; as the spirit of revelation says: "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev. 21, 3. In this state then there will be unspeakable joy and glory, and perfect happiness without end; a happiness—to express which—all tongues on earth would have to be silent and

dumb ; while the saints in heaven—the elect of God—will sing with heart, soul, and spirit, the heavenly hosanna, saying : "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. 7, 12.

PART SECOND.

BRIEF INSTRUCTION

From Holy Scripture, in Questions and Answers, for the Young.

Quest. 1. The question is put to the disciple, (the person desiring to unite with the church,) what induces him to desire to unite with the communion of believers, and be baptized?

Ans. I am impelled by faith, to separate myself from the world and its sinful lusts, and to submit in obedience to my Lord, Redeemer, and Savior, for the salvation of my soul. Heb. 5, 9.

Quest. 2. What has induced you to this?

Ans. The will and good pleasure of God, which were proclaimed and demonstrated to me through the preaching of the holy gospel; in which were also revealed unto me the laws and commandments of Christ; which I am bound to receive and observe in true faith? Matt. 7, 21.; 19, 17.

Quest. 3. Do you then expect to be justified and saved through your good works, and the keeping of the commandments of Christ?

Ans. No. For through our good works alone we cannot merit heaven; for salvation is the unmerited grace of God, purchased for us by Jesus Christ. Eph. 2, 8.

Quest. 4. For what purpose are then good works or the keeping of the commandments of Christ, necessary?

Ans. They are evidence of true faith in Jesus Christ; for obedience from love to God, is the light and life of faith; and without which, "faith is dead." James 2, 20.

Quest 5. Through what is man justified before God?

Ans. Through the Lord Jesus Christ alone; of whose righteousness we must become partakers through "faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5, 6.

Quest. 6. What is true faith?

Ans. It is a certain knowledge, whereby we hold every thing as true that is revealed to us in Holy Scripture; and whereby we cherish a full confidence, that the pardon of our sins, righteousness, and eternal life, are granted unto us by God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 2, 5.

Quest. 7. What do you believe?

Ans. I believe in God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

Quest. 8. How do you believe in God the Father?

Ans. I believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that he is one, eternal, al-

mighty, and just God, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, together with all things visible and invisible. Gen. 14, 17.

Quest. 9. How do you believe in the Son?

Ans. I believe that he is Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, our Savior and Redeemer; who has been with the Father from eternity, and who, at the "fulness of time," was sent into the world; that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the blessed Virgin Mary; suffered for us under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried; rose again from the dead on the third day; ascended into heaven; and sits at the right hand of God, the Almighty Father; whence he will again come to judge the living and the dead. Matt. 25, 31.; John 17, 5.; Gal. 4, 4.

Quest. 10. How do you believe in the Holy Ghost?

Ans. I believe and confess, that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and is of a divine nature; therefore I also believe in God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as being one true God. Besides I also confess a general Holy Christian Church, the communion of Saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and thereafter eternal life. 1 John, 5, 20.; John 5, 29.

Quest. 11. What do you confess of the Christian Church, or the Congregation of the Lord?

Ans. I confess by my faith, that there is a

Church of God, which the Lord Jesus purchased with his own blood; and which he "sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church." Eph. 5, 26. 27.

Quest. 12. In what does the Church of God consist?

Ans. In a number of persons, who, through faith in Jesus Christ, have withdrawn from a sinful world, and submitted in obedience to the gospel, not to live any more to themselves, but to Christ, in true humility; who also "give diligence" to exercise christian virtues, by observing God's holy ordinances. Such are members of the body of Christ, and heirs of eternal life. 2 Pet. 1, 11.

Quest. 13. How, and through what, is the Church of God upheld?

Ans. Through the preaching of the holy gospel, and the instruction of the Holy Ghost; and for the purpose of carrying on and maintaining which, teachers and ministers are elected by the church. Eph. 4, 11.

Quest. 14. Who has given power to the church to choose teachers?

Ans. I confess, that as the apostles "were accustomed" to do; so has God also given power to his church to do; namely, to elect teachers and ministers, that the "body of Christ may be edified" and preserved. Wherefore the election of such teachers and ministers also takes place according to the example which the apostles

were accustomed to observe in such matters. Eph. 4, 12.; Acts 1, 15—26.

Quest. 15. Whence comes the ordinance of the service to the poor?

Ans. Of this service we have an example in the Acts of the Apostles; who, when the "number of the disciples was multiplied," called together the multitude, and caused to be "appointed from among them, seven men," who took charge of such "business," which example is still observed; so that *that which* is contributed by christian hearts, is properly applied to the relief of the necessities of the poor members of the church. Acts 6, 1.; Eph. 4, 28.

Quest. 16. How, and through what means, are the members of the body of Christ incorporated into the church?

Ans. Through the ordinance of christian baptism, on confession of their faith, and repentance of their past sins; whereupon they are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28, 19.

Quest. 17. What is baptism properly?

Ans. I confess, that it is an external ordinance of Christ, a sign of a spiritual birth from God, a "putting on of Christ," and an incorporation into his church; an evidence that we have established a covenant with Christ? Rom. 6, 4.; Gal. 3, 27.; 1 Pet. 3, 21.

Quest. 18. Of what use is baptism?

Ans. It represents to true believers the washing away of the impurity of their souls, through

the blood of Christ, namely, the pardon of their sins; whereupon they console themselves with the hope of eternal salvation, through Jesus Christ, whom they have "put on" in baptism. Gal. 3, 27.

Quest. 19. To what are the members of the church of Christ, bound by baptism?

Ans. To the act of suffering their past sins to be buried into Christ's death by baptism, and of binding themselves to Christ in a new life and conversation—a life of obedience—in order that they may follow his will, and do what he has commanded them to do. Matt. 28, 20.

Quest. 20. What is the Lord's Supper?

Ans. I confess that it is an external ceremony and institution of Christ, administered to believers in the form of bread and wine; in the partaking of which, the death and sufferings of Christ are to be declared, and observed to his memory? 1 Cor. 11, 26.

Quest. 21. What purpose does the observance of the Sacrament subserve?

Ans. It is thereby represented to us, how Christ's holy body was sacrificed on the cross, and his precious blood shed, for us—for the pardon of our sins. 1 John, 1, 7.

Qnest. 22. What is the use of the observance of the Sacrament?

Ans. We thereby bear witness to our simple obedience to Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer; which has the promise of eternal salvation. Further, it secures unto us, through faith, the com-

munion of the body and blood of Christ, and comforts us with the benefit of his death; that is, the assurance of the pardon of our sins. 1 Cor. 10, 16.; Heb. 5, 9.

Quest. 23. Is marriage also an institution of God?

Ans. Yes. For it is instituted by God himself, and confirmed in the case of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Gen. 1, 27. 28.

Quest. 24. For what purpose is marriage instituted?

Ans. For the purpose of increasing the human race; so that the earth may thereby be peopled with inhabitants; as also, that fornication may be avoided. Therefore "every man" is to "have his own wife," and "every woman her own husband." 1 Cor. 7, 2.

Quest. 25. How must such marriage be begun, so that it does not clash with the institution?

Ans. Persons who are not too nearly related by consanguinity, may, after diligent prayer to God, enter into this state, and endeavor to live therein, in a christian manner, to the end of their days; provided that they—as members of the Christian Church—enter into marriage only with members of the church. Lev. 18, 6—17.; 1 Cor. 7, 39.; 9, 5.

Quest. 26. Is a member of the church not at all allowed to enter into matrimony with a person who is not agreed with him in faith and doctrine?

Ans. No. For this is contrary to the mar-

riage institution; and he who thus enters into matrimony, acts contrary to the law of God, and the doctrine of the apostles. Deut. 7, 3. 4.; Judges 3, 6. 7.; 1 Cor. 1, 10.; 7, 39.; Phil. 2, 1. 2.

Quest. 27. Can also a lawful marriage, for any cause, be divorced?

Ans. No. For the persons united by such marriage are so closely bound to each other, that they can in no wise separate, except in case of "fornication." Matt. 19, 9.

Quest. 28. What do you confess in regard to the power of civil government?

Ans. I confess, from the testimony of Holy Scripture, that kings and governments are instituted by God, for the welfare and common interest of the countries over which they rule; and that he who resists such authorities, "resists the ordinance of God." Rom. 13, 1. Wherefore we are under obligation to fear and honor government, and obey the same in all things that do not militate against the word of God. So we are also commanded to pray for the same. 1 Tim. 1, 2.

Quest. 29. Is it allowed to swear an oath?

Ans. No. For although this was allowed to the fathers of the Old Testament, yet has our Lord and institutor of the New Testament, Christ Jesus, expressly forbidden it; (Matt. 5, 33—37.) which is confirmed by the apostle James, when he says: "Above all things, my brethren, swear not; but let your yea be yea;

and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." James 5, 12.

Quest. 30. Is it allowed to take revenge?

Ans. No; although there was liberty to do so under the Old Testament Dispensation. But now that it is totally forbidden by Christ and his apostles, we must not lust after it, but in meekness do good unto our neighbor; yea, also, to our enemies. Matt. 5, 38. 39.; Rom. 12, 19—21.

Quest. 31. If a member of the church fall into some sin, or misdeed, what is to be done in such case?

Ans. I confess by virtue of the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, that reproof and discipline must be fostered and maintained amongst believers; so that the headstrong, as well as such as have committed gross sins and works of the flesh—whereby they have separated themselves from God—may not be suffered in the communion of believers; but for their own amendment, be "rebuked before all, that others also may fear." Matt. 18, 15—18.; Isaiah 59, 2.; 1 Tim. 5, 20.

Quest. 32. How must we demean ourselves towards such as are thus separated from the church?

Ans. According to the doctrine of the apostles, the true members of the church of Christ are to withdraw from such reproved and impenitent offenders, and have no spiritual communion with them, except by chance or occasion, when

they may be exhorted in love, compassion, and christian discretion, again to rise from their fallen state, and return to the church. Rom. 16, 17.; Tit. 3, 10.

Quest. 33. How long is the avoiding of such offenders to be observed?

Ans. Until they return again, give evidence of repentance,—of sorrow for their sins,—and earnestly desire, again to be admitted into the communion of the church. In such case they are, after solemn prayer to God, again received and admitted. 2 Cor. 2, 6. 7.

Quest. 34. What do you believe concerning the second coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead?

Ans. I believe that Christ, our Head, Lord, and Savior, will—just as he visibly ascended to heaven—again appear from thence in great power and glory, "with a shout, and with the trump of God." 1 Thes. 4, 16. "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5, 28. 29. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5, 10.

Quest. 35. Now as this confession agrees with the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, the ques-

tion is finally put to the disciple: Whether he is inclined from his whole heart, to submit himself to the will of his Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ—to deny himself, together with all sinful lusts—and to strive by the grace of God, in true faith and heart-felt humility—to lead a pious and godly life and holy conversation, according to the commandments of God, as long as he lives?

Ans. Yes. To which are heartily wished God's grace and rich blessings, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to salvation. To whom be honor and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

PART THIRD.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

OF THE MENNONITES,

Drawn up at Dordrecht, at a certain Peace Convention, on the 21st day of April, 1632.

ENTITLED:

Declaration of the Chief Articles of our General Christian Faith.

ARTICLE FIRST, OF GOD AND THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS.

Whereas it is declared, that "without faith it is impossible to please God," (Heb. 11, 6.) and that "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Therefore we confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart, together with all the pious, according to Holy Scripture, in one eternal, almighty, and incomprehensible God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and none more and none other; before whom no God existed, nor will exist after him. For from him, through him, and in him are all things. To him be blessing, praise, and honor, for ever and ever. Gen. 17, 1.; Deut. 6, 4.; Isaiah 46, 9.; 1 John 5, 7.

In this one God, who "worketh all in all," we believe. Him we confess as the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; who in six days created and prepared "heaven and the sea, and thinge that are therein." And we further believe, that this God still governs and preserves the same, together with all his works, through his wisdom, his might, and the "word of his power." Gen. 5, 1. 2.; Acts 14, 15.; 1 Cor. 12, 6.

Now when he had finished his works, and had, according to his good pleasure, ordained and prepared each of them, right and well, according to its nature, being and quality, he next created the first man Adam, the father of all of us, gave him a body formed "of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;" so that he "became a living soul; created by God in his own image and likeness," in "righteous and true holiness" unto eternal life. Further he regarded him also in particular, above all other creatures, and adorned him with many high and excellent gifts; put him into the garden of Eden, and gave him a commandment and interdiction. Thereupon he took a rib from the said Adam, made a woman out of it, brought her to him, and gave her to him as a helpmate and housewife. Consequently he has also caused, that from this first man, Adam, all men who "dwell on all the face of the earth," have been begotten and have descended. Gen. 1, 27.; 2, 7. 15. 17. 22.; 5, 1.; Acts 17, 26.

Article Second, of the Fall of Man.

We believe and confess, that, according to the purport of Holy Scripture, these our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not long remain in the happy state in which they were created; but did—after being seduced by the deceit and "subtility" of the serpent, and envy of the devil—violate the high commandment of God, and became disobedient to their Creator; through which disobedience "sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" so that "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," and thereby incurred the wrath of God and condemnation. For which reason our first parents were also driven by God out of Paradise, to cultivate the earth, to maintain themselves thereon in sorrow, and to "eat their bread in the sweat of their face," until they "returned to the ground, out of which they were taken." And that they did, therefore, through this one sin, so far apostatize, depart, and estrange themselves from God, that they could neither help themselves, nor be helped, by any of their descendants, nor by angels, nor by any other creature in heaven or on earth; nor be redeemed or reconciled to God; but would have had to be lost forever, had not God, (who pitied his creatures,) in mercy made provision for their fall, and interposed in their behalf. Gen. 3, 6. 23.; Rom. 5, 12—19.; Psalm 47, 8. 9.; Rev. 5, 3.; John 3. 16.

Article Third, of the Restoration of Man through the Promise of the Advent of Christ.

As it regards the restoration of the first of mankind, and their descendants, we believe and confess: That God, notwithstanding their fall, transgression, and sin, and although they had no power to help themselves, did nevertheless not wish to cast them off entirely, or permit them to be eternally lost; but that he again called them unto him, comforted them, and showed them that there were yet means with him for their reconciliation; namely, the immaculate Lamb, the Son of God; who "was fore-ordained" for the purpose aforesaid "before the foundation of the world," and who was promised to them and all their descendants, while they (the former) were yet in paradise, for their comfort, redemption, and salvation; yea, who was given to them thenceforward, through faith, as their own; after which all the pious patriarchs, to whom this promise was often renewed, longed, and searched; seeing it at a distance through faith, and expecting its fulfilments—expecting that he, (the Son of God,) would at his advent, again redeem and deliver the fallen race of man from their sins, their guilt, and unrighteousnes. John 1, 29.; 11, 27.; 1 Pet. 1, 19.; Gen. 3, 15.; 1 John, 2, 1. 2.; 3, 8.; Gal. 4, 4. 5.

Article Fourth, of the Advent of Christ into this World, and the Reason thereof.

We believe and confess further: That "when the fullness of the time was come," after which all the pious patriarchs so ardently longed, and which they so anxiously awaited,—the previously promised Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior, proceeded from God, being sent by him, and, according to the prediction of the prophets and the testimony of the evangelists, came into the world, yea, into the flesh, so that the word itself thus became flesh and man; and that he was conceived by the Virgin Mary, (who was espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David,) and that she bare him as her first-born son at Bethlehem, "wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." John 4, 25.; 16, 28.; 1 Tim. 3, 16.; Matt. 1, 21.; John 1, 14.; Luke 2, 7.

Further we believe and confess, that this is the same One, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;" who has "neither beginning of days, nor end of life." Of whom it is testified, that he is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." That this is also he—and none other—who was chosen, promised, and sent; who came into the world; and who is God's only, first, and proper Son; who was before John the Baptist, before Abraham, before the world; yea, who was David's Lord, and who is God of the

"whole earth," "the first-born of every creature;" who was sent into the world, and himself delivered up the body prepared for him, as "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor;" yea, for the comfort, redemption, and salvation of all—of the whole human race. Micah 5, 2.; Heb. 7, 3.; Rev. 1, 8.; John 3, 16.; Rom. 8, 32.; Col. 1, 15.; Heb. 10, 5.

But how, or in what manner, this worthy body was prepared, or how the word became flesh—man itself;—as to that, we content ourselves with the declaration which the worthy evangelists have given and left in their description thereof: according to which we confess with all the saints, that he is the Son of the living God; in whom consists all our hope, comfort, redemption, and salvation; and which we are to seek in no one else. Luke 1, 31—35.; John 20, 31.

Further, we believe and confess by authority of scripture, that when he had ended his course, and "finished" the work for which he was sent into the world, he was by the providence of God delivered into the hands of the unrighteous; suffered under the judge Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven; where he now sits at the right hand of the Majesty of God on high," whence he will again come to judge the living and the dead. Luke 23, 1.; 33, 53.; 24, 5. 6. 51.

And that thus the Son of God died, "tasted

death for every man," shed his precious blood, and thereby "bruised the head of the serpent," destroyed the works of the devil, "blotted out the hand-writing," and purchased redemption for the whole human race; and has thus become the cause of the eternal salvation of all these who from the time of Adam to the end of the world, shall have believed in him, and obeyed him. Gen. 3, 15.; 1 John, 3, 8.; Col. 2, 14.; Rom. 5, 18.

ARTICLE FIFTH, OF THE LAW OF CHRIST, WHICH IS THE HOLY GOSPEL, OR THE NEW TESTAMENT.

We also believe and confess, that Christ before his ascension, established and instituted his New Testament, and left it to his followers, to be and remain an everlasting testament; which he confirmed and sealed with his own precious blood; and with which he has also so strictly charged them, that it may not be altered either by men or angels; nor any thing taken therefrom or added thereto. Jer. 31, 31.; Heb. 9, 15—17.; Matt. 26, 28.; Gal. 1, 8.; 1 Tim. 6, 3.; Rev. 22, 18. 19.; Matt. 5, 18.; Luke 21, 33.

And that he has caused this testament, (in which the whole counsel and will of his heavenly Father, in so far as these are necessary to the salvation of man, are comprehended,) to be proclaimed, in his name, through his beloved apostles, messengers, and servants, (whom he choose and sent into all the world for this purpose,)

—to all nations, people, and tongues; these apostles preaching repentance and remission of sins. And that he consequently caused to be declared in said testament, all men without distinction, as his children and rightful heirs, in so far as they, as obedient children, through faith, follow, fulfil, and live according to the precepts of the same; having thus excluded none from the precious inheritance of eternal salvation, except the unbelieving and disobedient, the head-strong and unconverted; who despise such salvation; and thus by their own actions incur guilt by refusing the same, and "judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life." Mark 16, 15.; Luke 24, 46. 47.; Rom. 8, 17.; Acts 13, 46.

Article Sixth, of Repentance and Amendment of Life.

We believe and confess, that, as the "imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," and consequently inclined to all unrighteousness, sin and wickedness: That, therefore, the first doctrine of the precious New Testament, of the Son of God, is, repentance and amendment of life. Gen. 8, 21.; Mark 1, 15. Therefore those who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, must "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," amend their lives, believe the gospel, "depart from evil, and do good," desist from wrong, leave off sinning, "put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man,"

which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." For neither Baptism, Sacrament, nor Communion; nor any other external ceremony, can, without faith and the new birth, a change or renewal of life, help us—can so qualify us, that we may please God, or receive any consolation or promise of salvation from him. Luke 3, 8.; Eph. 4, 22. 24.; Col. 3, 9. 10. No. But on the contrary, we must go to God "with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," and believe in Jesus Christ, as scripture speaks and testifies of him. Through which faith we obtain the pardon of our sins, become sanctified, justified, and children of God; yea, partakers of his mind, nature, and image; as we are born again of God through his incorruptible seed from above. Heb. 10, 21. 22.; John 7, 38.; 2 Pet. 1, 4.

Article Seventh, of Holy Baptism.

As it regards baptism, we confess that all penitent believers, who through faith, the new birth, and renewal of the Holy Ghost, have become united to God, and whose names are recorded in heaven, must, on such scriptural confession of their faith, and renewal of life, according to the command and doctrine of Christ, and the example and usage of the apostles, be baptized with water in the reverential name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to the burying of their sins, and thus become incorporated with the communion of saints;

whereupon they must learn to "observe all things whatever the Son of God taught, left on record, and commanded his followers to do. Matt. 3, 15.; 28, 19. 20.; Mark 16, 15. 16.; Acts 2, 38.; 8, 12. 38.; 9, 19.; 10, 47.; 16, 33; Rom. 6, 3. 4.; Col. 2, 12.

ARTICLE EIGHTH, OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

We believe in and confess, a visible Church of God, consisting of those, who, as before remarked, have truly repented, rightly believed, are rightly baptized, are united with God in heaven, and incorporated with the communion of the saints on earth. 1 Cor. 12, 13. And these, we confess, are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation;" who have the testimony, that they are the "bride" of Christ; yea, that they are children and heirs of eternal life," a "habitation of God through the spirit," built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which "Christ himself is the chief corner stone"—the foundation on which his church is built. John 3, 29.; Matt. 16, 18.; Eph. 2, 19—21.; Tit. 3, 7.; 1 Pet. 1, 18. 19.; 2, 9. This church of the living God, which he has purchased and redeemed through his own precious blood, and with which he will be—according to his own promise—for its comfort and protection, "always, even unto the end of the world;" yea, "dwell among them, and walk among them," also preserve them, that no "winds" nor "floods," yea not even the "gates

of hell shall prevail against it,"—may be known by its scriptural faith, doctrine, love, and "godly conversation;" as also by its useful career, its practice and observance of the true ordinances of Christ, which he has strictly enjoined on his followers. Matt. 7, 25.; 16, 18.; 28, 20.; 2 Cor. 6, 16.

Article Ninth, of the Office of Teachers and Ministers—male and female—in the Church.

As it regards the offices, and election of persons to the same, in the church, we believe and confess: That, as the church cannot exist and prosper nor continue in its structure, without offices and regulations, that therefore the Lord Jesus has himself, (as a father in his house,) appointed and prescribed his offices and ordinances, and has given commandments concerning the same, as to how each one should walk therein, give heed to his own work and calling, and do as it becomes him to do. Eph. 4, 11. 12. For he himself, as the faithful and great shepherd, and bishop of our souls, was sent into the world, not to wound, to break, or destroy the souls of men; but to heal them, to seek that which is lost, to pull down the hedges and partition wall, so as to make out of *many one;* thus collecting out of Jews and heathen, yea out of all nations a church in his name; for which—so that no one might go wrong or be lost—he left his own life, and thus procured for them

salvation, freed and redeemed them; to which blessing no one could help them, or be of service in obtaining it. 1 Pet. 2, 25.; Matt. 18, 11.; Eph. 2, 13, 14.; John 10, 9. 11. 15.

And that he, besides this, left his church before his departure provided with faithful ministers, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, whom he had chosen by prayer and supplication through the holy spirit, so that they might govern the church, feed his flock, watch over and superintend the same; yea, do in all things as he left them an example, taught them, did himself, and commanded them to do; and to teach the church to observe all things which he commanded them to do. Eph. 4, 11.; Luke 6, 12. 13.; 10, 1.; Matt. 28, 20.

Also that the apostles were afterwards, as faithful followers of Christ and leaders of the church, diligent in these matters, namely, in choosing through prayer and supplication to God, brethren who were to provide all the churches in cities and on circuits, with bishops, pastors, and leaders, and to ordain to these offices such men as took "heed unto themselves and unto the doctrine" and flock; who were sound in the faith, pious in their life and conversation, and who had—as well within the church as "without"—a good reputation and good report; so that they might be a light and example in all godliness and good works, might worthily administer the Lord's ordinances—baptism and the sacrament—and that they (the brethren sent

by the apostles) might also, at all places, (where such were to be had,) appoint faithful men as elders, who were able to teach others, confirm them in the name of the Lord "with the laying on of hands," and who (the elders) were to take care of all things of which the church stood in need; so that they, as faithful servants, might well "occupy" their Lord's money, gain thereby, and thus "save themselves and those who hear them." 1 Tim. 3, 1.; 4, 14. 16.; Acts 1, 23. 24.; Tit. 1, 5.; Luke 19, 13.

That they should also take good care, (particularly each one of the charge over which he had the oversight,) that all the circuits should be well provided with almoners, who should have the care and oversight of the poor, and who were to receive gifts and alms, and again faithfully to distribute them amongst the poor saints who were in need; and this in all honesty, as is becoming. Acts 6, 3—6.

That we should also choose honorable old widows as servants; who, besides the almoners, are to visit, comfort, and take care of the poor, the weak, the afflicted, and the needy; as also to visit, comfort, and take care of widows and orphans; and further to assist in taking care of any matters in the church that properly come within their sphere, according to their best ability. 1 Tim. 5, 9. 10.; Rom. 16, 1. 2.

And as it further regards the almoners, that they, (particularly if they are fit persons, and chosen and ordained thereto by the church,)

may also in aid and relief of the bishops, exhort the church, (being, as already remarked, chosen thereto,) and thus assist in word and doctrine; so that each one may serve the other from love, with the gift which he has received from the Lord; so that through the common service and assistance of each member, according to his ability, the body of Christ may be edified, and the Lord's vineyard and church be preserved in its growth and structure. 2 Tim. 2, 2.

Article Tenth, of the Lord's Supper.

We also believe in and observe the breaking of bread or the Lord's Supper, as the Lord Jesus instituted the same—(with bread and wine)—before his sufferings, and also observed and ate it with the apostles; also commanded it to be observed to his memory; as the apostles did also consequently teach and observe the same in the church, and commanded it to be observed by believers in memory of the death and sufferings of the Lord—the breaking of his worthy body and the shedding of his precious blood—for the whole human race. So is the observance of this sacrament also to remind us of the benefit of the said death and sufferings of Christ, namely, the redemption and eternal salvation which he purchased thereby, and the great love thus shown to sinful man; whereby we are strongly exhorted also to love one another---to love our neighbor—to forgive and absolve him—even as Christ has done unto us—and also to

endeavor to maintain and keep alive the union and communion which we have with God, and amongst one another; which is thus shown and represented to us by the aforesaid breaking of bread. Matt. 26, 26.; Mark 14, 22.; Luke 22. 19.; Acts 2, 42. 46.; 1 Cor. 10, 16.; 11, 23—26.

Article Eleventh, of the Washing of the Feet of the Saints.

We also confess a washing of the feet of the saints, as the Lord Jesus did not only institute and command the same, but did also himself wash the feet of the apostles, although he was their Lord and master; thereby giving an example that they also should wash one another's feet, and thus do to one another as he did to them: which they also consequently taught believers to observe; and all this as a sign of true humiliation; but yet more particularly as a sign to remind us of the true washing—of the washing and purification of the soul in the blood of Christ. John 13, 4—17.; 1 Tim. 5, 10.

Article Twelfth, of Matrimony.

We also confess that there is in the church of God an "honorable" state of matrimony between two believers of the different sexes; as God first instituted the same in paradise between Adam and Eve, and as the Lord Jesus reformed it by removing all abuses which had crept into it, and restoring it to its first order. Gen. 1, 27.; 2, 18. 22. 24.

In this manner the apostle Paul also taught and permitted matrimony in the church, leaving it to each one's own choice to enter into matrimony with any person who would unite with him in such state, provided that it was done "in the Lord," according to the primitive order; the words "in the Lord," to be understood, according to our opinion, that just as the patriarchs had to marry amongst their own kindred or generation; so there is also no other liberty allowed to believers under the New Testament Dispensation, than to marry amongst the "chosen generation," or the spiritual kindred of Christ; that is, to such—and none others—as are already—previous to their marriage—united to the church in heart and soul, have received the same baptism, belong to the same church, are of the same faith and doctrine, and lead the same course of life, with themselves. 1 Cor. 7.; 9, 5.; Gen. 24, 4.; 28, 6.; Num. 36, 6—9. Such are then, as already remarked, united by God and the church according to the primitive order; and this is then called: "Marrying in the Lord." 1 Cor. 7, 39.

Article Thirteenth, of the Office of Civil Government.

We also believe and confess, that God has instituted civil government; and this for the punishment of the bad and the protection of the pious; as also further, for the purpose of governing the world—governing countries and cities;

as also again to preserve its subjects in good order and under good regulations. Wherefore we are not permitted to despise, blaspheme, or resist the same; but are to acknowledge it as a minister of God, be subject and obedient to it; particularly in such matters as do not militate against the law, will and commandments of God; yea, "to be ready to every good work;" also faithfully to pay it custom, tax, and tribute; thus giving it what is its due; as Jesus Christ taught, did himself, and commanded his followers to do. That we are also to pray to the Lord earnestly for the government and its welfare, and in behalf of our country; so that we may live under its protection, maintain ourselves, and "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." And further, that the Lord would recompense it here and hereafter in eternity, for all the benefits, liberties, and favors which we enjoy under its laudable administration. Rom. 13, 1—7.; Tit. 3, 1. 2.; 1 Pet. 2, 17.; Matt. 17, 27.; 22, 21.; 1 Tim. 2, 1. 2.

Article Fourteenth, of Defence.—(By Force.)

As it regards revenge, whereby we resist our enemies with the sword, we believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus has forbidden his disciples and followers all revenge and resistance, and has thereby commanded them not to "return evil for evil, nor railing for railing;" but to

"put up the sword into the sheath," or (as the prophets foretold) "beat them into ploughshares." Matt. 5, 39. 44.; Rom. 12, 14.; 1 Pet. 3, 9.; Isaiah 2, 4.; Micah 4, 3.

From this we see, that, according to the example, life, and doctrine of Christ, we are not to do wrong or occasion grief or vexation to any one; but to seek the welfare and salvation of all men; also, if necessity should require it, to flee, for the Lord's sake, from one city or country to another, and suffer the "spoiling of our goods," rather than give occasion of grief to any one; and if we are struck on our "right cheek, rather turn the other also," than revenge ourselves, or return the blow. Matt. 5, 39.; 10, 23.; Rom. 12. 19.

And that we are besides this, also to pray for our enemies, comfort and feed them, when they are hungry or thirsty, and thus convince them by well-doing. Rom. 12, 20. 21.

Finally, that we are to do good in all respects, "commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," and according to the law of Christ, do nothing to others that we would not wish them to do unto us. 2 Cor. 4, 2.; Matt. 7, 12.; Luke 6, 31.

Article Fifteenth, of the Swearing of Oaths.

As it regards the swearing of oaths, we believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus has dissuaded his followers from and forbidden them

the same; that is, that he commanded them to "swear not at all;" but that their "yea" should be "yea," and their "nay, nay." From which we perceive that all oaths, high and low, are forbidden; and that instead of them we are to confirm all our promises and covenants, declarations and testimonies of all matters, merely with "yea that is yea," and "nay that is nay;" and that we are to perform and fulfil at all times, and in all things, to every one, whatsoever about which we thus affirm, as faithfully as if we had confirmed it by the most solemn oath. And if we do thus, it is our conviction, that no one—not even government itself—has a right in justice, to require more of us. Matt. 5, 34—37.; James 5, 12.; 2 Cor. 1, 17.

Article Sixteenth, of Excommunication or Expulsion from the Church.

We also believe in, and confess, a state of excommunication—a separation from—of spiritual punishment by the church, for the amendment, and not for the destruction, of offenders; so that what is pure may be separated from what is impure. That is, if a person, after having been enlightened, has received the knowledge of the truth, and has been received into the communion of saints, does wilfully, or out of presumption, sin against God, or commit some other "sin unto death," thereby falling into such unfruitful works of darkness, that he becomes separated from God, and debarred

from his kingdom;—that such an one—when his works are become manifest, and sufficiently known to the church—cannot remain in the "congregation of the righteous; but must, as an offensive member and notorious sinner, be excluded from the church, "rebuked before all," and "purged out as a leaven;" and thus remain until his amendment, as an example and terror to others; as also that the church may be kept pure from such "spots" and "blemishes;" so that not for the want of this, the name of the Lord be blasphemed, the church be dishonored, and a stumblingblock be thrown in the way of those "without." Finally, that the offender may not be damned with the world, but may again be convinced of the error of his ways, and brought to repentance and amendment of life. Isaiah 59, 2.; 1 Cor. 5, 5. 6. 12.; 1 Tim. 5, 20.; 2 Cor. 13, 10.

As it further regards brotherly admonition, as also the instruction of the erring, we are to "give all diligence" to watch over them, and exhort them in all meekness to the amendment of their ways; (James 5, 19. 20.) and in case any should remain obstinate and unconverted, to reprove them as the case may require. In short, the church must "put away from among itself him that is wicked," whether it be in doctrine or life.

Article Seventeenth, of the Shunning of those who are Expelled.

As it regards the withdrawing from, or the shunning of, those who are expelled, we believe and confess, that if any one, whether it be through a wicked life or perverse doctrine—is so far fallen as to be separated from God, and consequently rebuked by, and expelled from, the church; he must also, according to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, be shunned and avoided by all the members of the church, (particularly by those to whom his misdeeds are known,) whether it be in eating or drinking, or other such like social matters. In short, that we are to have nothing to do with him; so that we may not become defiled by intercourse with him, and partakers of his sins; but that he may be made ashamed, be affected in his mind, convinced in his conscience, and thereby induced to amend his ways. 1 Cor. 5, 9—11.; Rom. 16, 17.; 2 Thes. 3, 14.; Tit. 3, 10.

That nevertheless—as well in shunning as in reproving such offender—such moderation and christian discretion be used, that such shunning and reproof may not be conducive to his ruin, but be serviceable to his amendment. For should he be in need, hungry, thirsty, naked, sick or visited by some other affliction, we are in duty bound, according to the doctrine and practice of Christ and his apostles, to render him aid and assistance, as necessity may require;

otherwise the shunning of him might be rather conducive to his ruin than to his amendment. 1 Thes. 5, 14.

Therefore we must not treat such offenders as enemies, but exhort them as brethren, in order thereby to bring them to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance; so that they may again become reconciled to God and the church, and be received and admitted into the same—thus exercising love towards them, as is becoming. 2 Thes. 3, 15.

Article Eighteenth, of the Resurrection of the Dead and the Last Judgment.

As it regards the resurrection of the dead, we confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart, that according to scripture—all men who shall have died, or "fallen asleep," will—through the incomprehensible power of God—at the day of judgment, be "raised up" and made alive; and that these, together with all those who then remain alive, and who shall be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" shall "appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," where the good shall be separated from the bad, and where "every one shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;" and that the good or pious shall then further, as the blessed of their Father, be received by Christ into eternal life; where they shall receive that joy which "eye hath not seen, nor

ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of men." Yea, where they shall reign and triumph with Christ for ever and ever. Matt. 22, 30. 31.; 25, 31.; Dan. 12, 2.; Job 19, 25. 26.; John 5, 28. 29.; 1 Cor. 15.; 2 Cor. 5, 10.; 1 Thes. 4, 13.; Rev. 11, 12.

And that, on the contrary, the wicked or impious, shall, as the accursed of God, be cast into "outer darkness;" yea, into eternal, hellish torments; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" and where—according to Holy Scripture—they can expect no comfort nor redemption throughout eternity. Isaia 66, 24.; Matt. 25, 46.; Mark 9, 46.; Rev. 14. 11.

May the Lord through his grace make us all fit and worthy, that no such calamity may befall any of us; but that we may be "diligent, and so take heed to ourselves, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." Amen.

Now these are, as before mentioned, the chief articles of our general Christian Faith, which we every where teach in our congregations and families, and according to which we profess to live; and which, according to our conviction, contain the only true Christian Faith; which the apostles in their time believed and taught; yea, which they testified by their lives and confirmed by their deaths; in which we will also, according to our weakness, gladly abide, live, and die, in order that we may obtain, one day, together with the apostles and all the pious, the salvation of our souls through the grace of God.

Thus were the foregoing articles of faith concluded by our united churches in the city of Dort, in Holland, on the 21st day of April, in the year of our Lord 1632, and signed by the following ministers and teachers:

DORT.
Isaac Koenig,
Johann Cobryssen
Jan Jacobs,
Jacuis Terwen,
Claes Dirksen,
Mels Gysbaerts,
Adrian Cornelis.

FLISSINGEN.
Dillaert Willeborts,
Jacob Pennen,
Lieven Marymehr.

AMSTERDAM.
Tobias Goverts,
Peter Jansen Mayer,
Abraham Dirks,
David ter Haer,
Peter Jan von Zingel.

MIDDLEBURG.
Bastian Willemsen,
Jan Winkelmans.

HARLEM.
John Doom,
Peter Gryspeer,
Dirk Wouters Kolenkamp,
Peter Joosten.

BOMMEL.
Wilhelm Jan von Exselt,
Gispert Spiering.

ROTTERDAM.
Balten Centen Schumacher,
Michael Michiels,
Israel von Halmael,
Heinrich Dirkse Apeldoren,
Andreas Lucken.

SCHIEDAM.
Cornelis Bom,
Lambrecht Paeldink.

LEYDEN.
Christian de Konink,
Jan Weyns.

BLOCKZYL.
Claes Claesson,
Peter Peterson.

ZIRICZEE.
Anton Cornelis,
Peter Jan Zimmerman.

UTRECHT.
Herman Segers,
Jan Heinrich Hochfeld,
Daniel Horens,
Abraham Spronk,
Wilhelm von Brockhuysen.

FROM THE UPPER COUNTRY.
Peter von Borsel,
Anton Hans.

CREVELDT.
Herman op den Graff,
Wilhelm Kreynen.

ZEALAND.
Cornelis de Moir,
Isaac Claes.

GORCUM.
Jacob von Sebrecht,
Jan J. von Kruysen.

ARNHEIM.
Cornelis Jans,
Dirk Renderson.

Besides this confession being adopted by so many churches, and signed by their ministers, all the churches in Alsace and Germany afterwards adopted it unanimously. Wherefore it was undertaken to be translated into the languages of these countries—into French and German—for the service of the churches in them, and for that of others. Of which this may serve as a notice.

The following attestation was signed by the brethren in Alsace, who examined this confession and adopted it as their own:—

We, the undersigned, ministers of the word of God, and elders of the church in Alsace, hereby declare and make known, that being assembled to-day, the 4th of Feb. in the year of our Lord 1660, at Onenheim, on account of the Confession of Faith, which was adopted at the peace convention in the city of Dort, on the 21st day of April in the year 1632; and having examined the same, and found it, according to our judgment, in agreement with the word of God, we have entirely adopted it as our own. Which we have in testimony of the truth, and a firm faith, signed with our own hands, as follows:—

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
MAGENHEIM.	MARKIRCH.
John Miller.	Jacob Schmidt,
HEIDELHEIM.	Bertram Habich.
John Ringer.	OHNENHEIM.
BALDENHEIM.	Ulrich Husser,
Jacob Schebly.	Jacob Gochnauer.
ISENHEIM.	JEPSENHEIM.
Henry Schneider.	John Rudolph Bumen.
KUNENHEIM.	DUERRSANZENHEIM.
Rudolph Egli.	Jacob Scheider.
MARKIRCH.	KUNENHEIM.
Adolph Schmidt.	Henry Frick.

Postscript to the foregoing 18 *Articles.*

From an authentic circular letter of the year 1557, from the Highland to the Netherland churches, it appears that from the Eyfelt to Moravia there were 50 churches, of which some consisted of from 500 to 600 brethren. And that there were about that time at a conference at Strasburg, about 50 preachers and elders present, who discoursed about matters concerning the welfare of the churches.

These superintendents of the non-resistant christians endeavored earnestly to propagate the truth; so that like a "grain of mustard seed" of small beginning, it grew against all bloody persecution, to the height in which it is to be seen in so many large churches in Germany, Prussia, the Principality of Cleves, &c., and particularly in the United Netherlands.

But finally, alas! there arose disunion amongst

them about matters of faith, which so deeply grieved the peaceably disposed amongst them, that they not only thought about means to heal the schism, and restore union, but did also take the matter in hand, and concluded at Cologne, in the year 1591, a laudable peace between the Highland and Netherland churches. Still the schism was not fully healed. Consequently in the year 1628 and 1630, it was deemed necessary at a certain conference, by some lovers of peace, to appoint another conference, in order to see whether they could come to an understanding, and the schism be fully healed. Consequently, in order to attain this object in the most effectual manner, there assembled at Dort, from many of the churches in Holland, on the 21st of April, 1632, 51 ministers of the word of God, appointed for said purpose; who deemed it advisable that a scriptural confession of faith should be drawn up, to which all parties should adhere, and on which this peace convention and the intended union should be founded and built. Which was then accordingly drawn up, publicly adopted, confirmed, signed, the so much wished for peace obtained, and the light again put on the candlestick, to the honor of non-resistant christianity.

PART FOURTH.

USEFUL AND EDIFYING

ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG,

ON

TRUE REPENTANCE, SAVING IN CHRIST JESUS,

PURE LOVE TO GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOR, OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD, AND A FULL SURRENDER OF THE SOUL INTO HIS HANDS.

In Questions and Answers.

BY

CHRISTIAN BURKHOLDER,

Preacher of the Mennonite Church at New-Holland, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

PREFACE.

The apostle Paul says: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." The apostles always wrote of true repentance, of saving faith, of love to God and our neighbor, and of true obedience to the commandments of the Son of God in baptism and the sacrament, according to the ordinances of the church; in order that their disciples might "obey from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to them." By which writings and words, they exhorted, edified, and strengthened each other in the faith; and the more so, as the day of their "redemption" approached.

Now for a similar reason, and from a similar intention, a new compilation has been made out of our old confession of faith; which confession we have received and avowed in our baptism, as right and true; and as we are all under the same covenant, we have all an equal share in the benefits and responsibility of this confession; and as there have been, and still are, many opposers, we also equally share the cross, ignominy, and contempt, that may follow our ad-

herence to the same. And as it may further, under God's blessing, be serviceable to the edification of youth, and may also serve as a remembrance of our foundation of faith, we, the undersigned, are willing to aid in its being published; and would here invoke the blessing of God to a spiritual growth and edification in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Signed by twenty-seven ministers and deacons of the Mennonite church, in the name of the whole church.

NOTICE TO THE KIND READER.

The chief motive to the production of this work is the present declining state of the Christian Church, in which there is such a great difference in the performance of external worship; as also in the external demeanor of its members towards each other; as one has still some fault to find with his neighbor—thus following his own will and inclination, contrary to the advice of the apostle, when he says: "All of you be subject to one another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." 1 Pet. 5, 5.

But as almost every one thinks the chief fault is in some one else, and not in himself, poor man overlooks himself, without thinking of his own depraved and deceived heart. In such a state man possesses great liberty for himself; in consequence of which the young fall into licentiousness and sensuality. And with all this, although he is nothing—poor man may think himself to be something—and thus deceive himself. Indeed there are many who consider the present state of christendom as a Babel, and who take great pains to destroy it; but who on the contrary, only exert themselves to build up the ruined city Jericho, which they give the name Zion. Nevertheless, there are also yet many innocent and faithful hearts.

The chief address of this book is directed to the rising generation, for the reason, that there is more to be expected from uncultivated land, than from an old exhausted soil. May the Lord Jesus become to us light and life, and bless us with his Holy Spirit; yea, with wisdom and knowledge.

After having taken into consideration the above reasons, we have been induced to lay anew before the eyes of the young, our Christian Confession of Faith, as also the Covenant of Baptism. And as we have fallen upon times and circumstances in which our predecessors never were, they could give neither warning against, nor instruction about them. But before we took the step just mentioned, we declared our minds to the church, who advised us to draw up a writing, and submit it to public consideration. This we accordingly did, in a sense of much weakness and inability. And as repentance, saving faith, and love to God and our neighbor, comprise the chief articles that appertain to the christian course, as well as to a true foundation of faith, these matters are treated of in the first and second addresses. The other articles are introduced in questions and answers.

Written the 21st day of February, 1792.

We remain the

WELLWISHERS OF ALL MEN.

REMARKS. — This "Useful and edifying Address to the Young," was printed for the first time in the year 1804, and in the same year it was reprinted at Ephrata, Pa. In the year 1829 it was printed a third time at Allentown, and then for the fourth time at Berlin, Canada, in 1839, as an Appendix to the "Spiritual Conversation." And now it is printed for the first time in English in 1857.

FIRST ADDRESS,

To the Rising Generation, on true Repentance.

Repentance is the first command of Christ, as is to be seen Matt. 4, 17. "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But this is not merely his first command—his first command to his disciples—but also his last, as is to be seen in Luke 24, 46. 47.; where he opened unto them the scriptures, and said: "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name," &c. This command the apostles were to convey to all men. "But now he commandeth all men every where to repent." Acts 17, 30.

Thus all men, without contradiction, need repentance, as they have all sinned, are children of wrath, and by nature carnally and earthly minded. Yea, in this state our hearts are a desert, overgrown with thistles and thorns; and into this desert comes the voice of the preacher: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Luke 3, 4. This is the voice of true repentance—the voice once addressed to Adam, when the Lord said: "Where art thou?" Whereupon the soul answers: "I hear thy voice, and am afraid, because I am naked."

Thus man is brought to a proper sense of himself, by the quickening power of the word

of God; so that he learns to know himself with all his inherent defects. Yea, hereby he is brought to "acknowledge his transgressions, and his sins are ever before him." Psalm 51, 3. Yea, to one who is penitent, every thing becomes a burden, and every thing sinful a great sin. "He is bowed down greatly; and goes mourning all the day long." Psalm 38, 6.

Greatly afflicted and troubled is a penitent soul, if she somewhat delights in the pleasures of youth, and then retires to solitude. This becomes, as it were, a hell to her conscience; and she is ready to cry out: "O what have I done! O wretched man that I am!" Thus looking upon the tree of nature as one that bringeth forth no good fruit; as one concerning which the preacher of repentance says: "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke 13, 7. "Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Luke 3, 9.

Man carnally minded, or in a state of nature, is compared to the "vine of Sodom, of the fields of Gomorrah;" whose "grapes are grapes of gall," and whose "clusters are bitter;" whose wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps." Deut 32, 32. 33.

The Lord, in alluding to the disobedience and wickedness of the children of Israel, (Deut. 32, 23.) says: "I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them." Thus speaks and feels a person who has come to a

knowledge of his sins; his heart is tender as melted wax; he is penitent; he is heartily sorry, that so much evil cleaves unto him; for when he wants to do "good, evil is present with him." But his being in possession of this knowledge, is not yet sufficient. For John the Baptist says: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." Matt. 3, 8.

The fruit of true repentance grows in a change of heart; for the heart of man by nature, is proud and conceited; but the heart of a penitent is humble and contrite; and as the heart is, so is the fruit thereof. It moreover "sets its affections on things above, and not on things beneath;" (Col. 3, 2.) In short, it imitates the virtues of our Savior while on earth: who himself declared that he was "meek and lowly in heart." Matt. 11, 29. And here it may be remarked, that a person who is "meek and lowly in heart, cannot bring forth fruit that has externally the appearance of pride, whether it be in words, actions, or the "putting on of apparel." 1 Pet. 3, 3. "For in pride is destruction and much trouble." Tobit. 4, 13. But when further the heart is filled with the meekness of Christ, it bespeaks a good tree; (Matt. 12, 33.) while on the other hand, evil fruit grows out of the evil seed which the enemy has sown into the human heart by means of the senses and thoughts; whereby much evil fruit has been brought forth; particularly in reference to the lust of inconti-

nence, with which poor man is, as it were, intoxicated.

True repentance is further very necessary; yea, "fruits meet for repentance;" whereby an entire change for the better takes place—whereby we come to a pious and virtuous course of life; so that we do no more that which we were wont to do in our former sinful course of life. The grace and power, however, of leaving off a wicked course of life, and leading a pious life, as just stated, must be obtained of the Lord, through earnest prayer day and night. Good resolutions alone are not sufficient for this purpose; for it is the "goodness of God that leadeth us to repentance." Rom. 2, 4.

We have moreover to take care, that we do not "after our hardness and impenitent hearts, treasure up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." For in true repentance we are subject to great temptations, as the enemy assails us in many different ways. At times it appears to us, that at no time more sinful and adverse things have come into our way, than just now that we are resolved to amend our lives. We are ridiculed by the world; of others we see bad examples. Again the enemy tempts us with self-exaltation, trying to persuade us that we have had much experience—much more than we really have had; that we are far advanced in the divine life, &c. In short, he tempts us in every way. But the weapons of

our "warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10, 4. 5. For he who yields obedience to Christ, endeavors to "keep his word." Luke 11, 28.

A person who labors under temptation, does well if he diligently takes heed to the word of God, as "unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in his heart." 2 Pet. 1, 19. For the Lord says: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Rev. 3, 10.

The whole work of regeneration, or the new birth, grounds itself on true repentance; and penitent souls "love another with a pure heart fervently: being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Pet. 1, 22. 23.

To a penitent the word of God becomes life and light in the soul. He who listens to it, becomes thereby changed in heart—converted; namely, from pride to humility; from incontinence to chastity; from hatred to love; from covetousness to liberality; from the habit of lying and cheating to truth and honesty. Yea, he is thus transformed from darkness into light; rescued from the power of Satan, and converted to God. This, dear reader, is what is produced by "fruits meet for repentance."

SECOND ADDRESS,

To the Rising Generation, on Saving Faith, and pure love to God and our Neighbor.

True faith is the efficacious power of God in a penitent soul, to "believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6, 29.

Saving faith in Christ Jesus is therefore more than a mere traditionary faith; nor does it "stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God;" (1 Cor. 2, 5.) whereby he operates upon the soul, in order that we may know "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." Eph. 1, 19. True "faith" is further, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" (Heb. 11, 1.) for the evidence of things which we see, is not faith, but sight; therefore to believe the evidence of things not seen, is faith. The Savior is invisible to our natural eyes; yet, "whom having not seen" (says Peter) "ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." 1 Pet. 1, 8. Yes, my beloved young friends, here we may see what a precious thing faith in God and Christ Jesus is. Be persuaded therefore, to strive for such faith, which is "much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried in the fire." 1 Pet. 1, 7. Yet, beloved reader, whoever you are, let us think for

a moment, what can be done in the kingdom of this world with gold and silver, and what men do and suffer for the sake of it. Yet, as already said, true faith is much more precious than these. For according to the testimony of Jesus Christ, not a soul will be lost that has this faith. He says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3, 36. "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11, 6.

But perhaps you ask how, or by what means, true faith is obtained? Christ says: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7, 38.

From these words it is to be inferred, that Holy Scripture is a means, whereby to obtain true faith; as also, that faith must be a living faith, and in accordance with Scripture. So our faith should also be strong. For when the disciples of Christ were weak in faith, he said unto them: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24, 25. 27. Further he says, (v. 46. 47.): "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to

rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name," &c. So faith also "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10, 17. So Paul also says: "I say none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." Acts 26, 22. "So worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." Acts 24, 14.

So the apostle also exhorts." To "remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." Heb. 13, 7.

God has laid in his word a secret power, which is a powerful remedy for all the wounds and ills to which poor fallen man is subject; for every thing that is made is made by the "word of his power." So the word Spirit, and life are also intimately connected; so that they cannot be separated; no more so, than the preached word. The apostle Peter was the means whereby three thousand souls were brought to repentance, and faith in Christ in one day. So Paul, and the other apostles also preached the gospel to many heathen nations in cities and country; by which means many thousand heathen obtained saving faith; for whom Jesus had already offered up his prayer to the Father, as well as for his own disciples, as follows: "I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on

me through their word." John 17, 20. God is an invisible mighty Being, and speaks through his Holy Spirit, to many a soul in secret, in order to reprove it, and convince it of sin and the depravity of its nature; and after repentance again to comfort it. Yea, this is the case even with such souls as have not the scriptures, or cannot read them.

But the convictions of such souls agree with the doctrines of the Son of God and that of his apostles; for the teachings of the spirit of God agree with these doctrines. Therefore scripture is not to be set aside; for it is with it as with natural food: this appears before our natural eyes to be dead, and yet there is a power in it, whereby our natural life is preserved. If we however do not relish such food, it follows that we are not in health. And so it is with the word of God. If we do not enjoy its precious contents, it follows that we are yet in a state of spiritual disease, if not dead—dead in sin.

Another means of becoming strengthened in faith is earnest prayer to God. Of this means the disciples of our Lord made use in their weakness. They went to Jesus and prayed: "Lord increase our faith." Luke 17, 5. So the father of the child which had a dumb spirit "cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Mark 9, 24. So again the disciples, to whom we just alluded, although they all times believed and acknowledged, that Christ was the Son of the living God, yet were

they sometimes, in times of necessity, of "small faith." But how weak are we in faith in our time! Yea, I fear that our faith is in many respects too weak—that if it were put to the test, it would be found wanting.

The Savior says: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on earth?" Luke 18, 8. Indeed every body believes and confesses, that there is an Invisible Divine Power, which created every thing, and preserves every thing; and that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, &c. But what does it help us if we embrace and adhere to such confession of faith, and yet lead a heathenish course of life, in all kinds of sin and wickedness? "What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" James 2, 14.

True faith leads us into a state of self-denial—a state in which we follow Christ, as did his faithful followers in the time of his incarnation. Yea, here a faith is required that "worketh by love;" a faith whereby we become "justified," and obtain "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5, 1. 2. Yea, a faith which has for its foundation the word of God; which "word (the apostle says) is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach." Rom. 10, 8.

Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called

the friend of God." James 2, 23. Yea, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in the faith, and gave glory to God; being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform." Rom. 4, 18. 20. 21.

Through faith he became further obedient to God in all things, as did all the ancient faithful; who "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth," and who "endured, as seeing him who is invisible." From which we may see, that true faith, and a full surrender of the soul into the hands of God, is a matter of very great importance. "Believe the gospel," says Christ; (Mark 1, 15.) "for" (says Paul further) "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. For therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Rom. 1, 16. 17. So Christ also sometimes said: "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." Also: "Thy faith has made the whole." Matt. 8, 13.; 9, 22.

Through faith we obtain the pardon of our sins, and salvation through the blood of Christ. For "all things are possible to him that believeth." Mark 9, 23.

If all our sins, small and great, were lying before us on a heap, they would form a mountain, that it would be difficult to surmount. But if our faith were like a "grain of mustard seed,"

this mountain might be removed thereby. For "faith is the victory that overcometh the world." 1 John, 5, 4. "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents," &c., &c. Mark 16, 17. 18.

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." 1 John, 3, 8. There is no difference: for all have sinned; and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3, 23.

Now as the devil has sown the seed of sin into every human heart, each one has to resist his satanic influence, or cast him out by true faith. For "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John, 3, 8. The devil has his work "in the children of disobedience." Eph. 2, 2.

The Savior says further: "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth." John 3, 31. But they that believe in him, as already remarked, "shall speak with new tongues," &c.

Again the Lord speaks through the prophets: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit." Ezek. 18, 31.

A person who has received a new heart, also speaks with a new tongue. John, the preacher of repentance, said to the Pharisees and Saducees, who came to his baptism: "O generation

of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Matt. 3, 7. And Christ says on another occasion: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. 23, 33.

Now an impenitent heart is a breeding nest of this poison and seed of serpents; which may however be expelled by faith and repentance. Flee therefore from sin, as you would flee from a serpent. For it is a deadly draught to the soul; which may occasion its disease, if not death. Again James calls the tongue "an unruly member, full of deadly poison." James 3, 8.

But Christ is the proper destroyer of serpents; he said to his disciples: "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Luke 10, 19.

Through faith in him and his word, the serpents, with their tricks and wiles, are expelled from the heart; and when the hands of faith are laid upon the sin-sick soul, she will recover.

See, dearly beloved, these are the signs which accompany those who believe in Christ. For he is the "resurrection and the life: he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in him, shall never die. Believest thou this?" John 11, 25, 26.

The preached word did not profit them that heard it, not being mixed with faith. But we

which have believed do enter into rest." Heb. 4, 2. 3.

Pure love to God and our neighbor is inseparably connected with true faith in God; for how can we love God, if we do not believe in him. Yea, faith and love are like two brothers, born of the same parents; and they are both gifts of God. "We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John, 4, 19. The love of God to us is similar to the love of a mother to her children; but much greater. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have commpassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isaiah 49, 15. A mother loves her children while they are young and small; and has much trouble, care, and sorrow on their account. Indeed while they are small, the bond of love between children and mother is very strong. But as the former grow taller and stronger, they often follow their own will and ways, contrary to the advice and consent of their parents, to their own injury, of both body and soul. To honor and obey our parents "is the first commandment with promise." Eph. 6, 2.

To be disobedient to the word and will of God, "is as the sin of witchcraft; and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Sam. 15, 23. For under the influence of these sins, we are blind, so that we do not see how far we have erred from the right way, until we learn this to our own injury; as was the case with

Saul, as may be seen by referring to the foregoing quotation.

He who is disobedient errs in point of love. Now if parents are filled with the love of God towards their children, bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and there is also a love of the children in return towards their parents—in such case obedience grows out of love. Christ was a pattern in this matter. He loved his Father, and obeyed him until his death. And to those that "received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." John 1, 12. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love," &c. Eph. 5, 1. 2. "My little children, let us not love in word; neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." 1 John, 3, 18.

To "love in deed and in truth," is something very important. Such as do this are true and faithful children of God. For the Savior says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father," &c. John 14, 15. 21.

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." John 15, 10. In such hearts the "love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost." Rom. 5, 5.

Now, dear children, you can see, that if you love Jesus with the whole heart, such love will

lead you to embrace the true doctrine, and to obey the same. So that if you do not live in a state of obedience, you are not in a state of love. For a child that loves its father, also obeys him. The greatest commandment that was left us of the Father by the Son, is: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." Mark 12, 29. 31.

Now my dear young hearts, if the word of God binds us so closely, to love him as our Creator, "with all our heart, and with all our strength," there remains nothing of our hearts, wherewith to love the vanities and pleasures of this world; such as the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;" for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John, 2, 15.

Therefore let every one well distinguish whether he is actuated by the love of God, or by the impure love and lusts of nature. For love and desire have a great influence on the mind either for good or evil; so much so, that they make all pains and labor comparatively light and easy. "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to

which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Col. 3, 14. 15.

But corrupt nature is not willingly bound by the bond of God's love, as this love aims only at holy and divine things, and nature being inclined to love natural and earthly things. Man has also a strong love for himself and his own righteousness. So the scribes and pharisees also had many external works of righteousness; nevertheless, Christ said unto them: "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." John 5, 42. Yea, a person may do many good things; but if he has not the love of God in him, they will avail him nothing; even if he would "bestow all his goods to the poor, and give his body to be burned." 1 Cor. 13, 3. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. 13, 1. 2.

In short, the only object of eternal joy, life, and the rest of our souls, is, Christ Jesus; and to learn to know God through him; as he himself says: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17, 3.

Again John says: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. God is love;

and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God; and God in him." 1 John, 4, 8. 16.

If God dwells in our hearts through true faith, we have learned to know him. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John, 2. 4. Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. 1. 5.

What a precious thing then is the true love of God, as all else without it, avails nothing. Yet we should think, that to "speak with the tongue of angels," to "understand all mysteries" besides other great deeds, could not be done without the power of God, as well as the casting out of "devils" in the name of the Lord. Matt. 7, 22. Yet such is the case. Through the deceit of the enemy great things are done; through the love of God, on the contrary, small things; such as are foolish and insignificant in the eyes of the world. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." 1 Cor. 1, 27.

For instance, when a certain woman wept at the feet of Jesus, and "began to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed them," (Luke 7, 38.) it appeared foolish to the "Pharisee," for she was a "sinner." But Jesus said: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much:

but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." v. 47. Through repentance, faith, and love, we obtain the pardon of our sins; for "charity shall cover the multitude of sins." 1 Pet. 4, 8. So we are also to believe and know, that the love of Christ "passeth knowledge." Eph. 3, 19. "For if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. For knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. But if any man love God, the same is known of him." 1 Cor. 8, 1—3.

Now as men in all their worldly affairs strive after the best things, every one according to his standing and means; so we should also in spiritual matters, earnestly "covet the best gifts"—and strive after love, as these are the chief elements of christianity.

Of the Love of our Neighbor.

Pure and undefiled love to our neighbor, and our fellow-creatures in general, whereby we can love them as ourselves, is something that is not possessed by the mere natural man. Such love must be obtained by the Lord, as Paul says: "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." 1 Thes. 4, 9. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John, 4, 7.

Pure love is of a divine nature; and must therefore be sought in, and obtained of God. On the contrary, incharitableness is sinful and

ungodly, as James says: "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." James 3, 14. 15.

He who lives in "envy, hatred, wrath, and strife," generally lives in a state of self-righteousness—thinking that he has a right to speak and act as he does; and this false righteousness keeps him in his sinful course of life. For did he believe in regard to himself, that his conduct was "earthly, sensual, and devilish," it is impossible that he could live on from year to year in "wrath and strife." For the apostle also says: "They which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. 5, 20. 21.

Man is by nature a fallen and depraved creature, possesses much self-love and ambition, and seeks his own advantage in his intercourse with his fellow-creatures. Besides, the "wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." James 1, 20.

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John, 3, 15.

The kingdom of Satan is an unpeaceable kingdom, it being ever engaged in quarrels and wars. The kingdom of Christ, on the contrary, is a peaceable kingdom; it consists of nothing but love, peace, and unity. Now if the love to our fellow-creatures is of the right kind, it is of a divine nature, just as is the love of God towards us.

For "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son for us." John 3, 16. Yea, such great love has he shown towards us—that his Son died for us; and now that we are called to be his followers, we are to show a like love towards our brethren. To this effect he has left us a commandment: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do what I command you." John 15, 12—14.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John, 3, 16.

Now, beloved reader, consider for once earnestly this matter on account of its importance; inasmuch as love and peace are connected. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12, 14.

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 John, 4, 20. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him: but he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John, 2, 10, 11.

Now think, beloved reader, what a pitiable

state that is, in which love between brethren is wanting. A blind man, who is deprived of all natural light, is a poor creature. But if a man is so blinded by sin, that he does not see sin any more, he is much poorer and more miserable yet than the man who is deprived of his natural sight. For while he says, he does see, while he does not see, his "sin remaineth;" and this for the reason that he does not see it any more. John 9, 41.

Reader, perhaps you have lived for some time in a state of uncharitableness with your neighbor; and it would not cost you your life, (as it did your Savior,) to make peace with him. It would only cost a little of your pride and self-righteousness; and can you not give up these? or do you still want to "please yourself." Rom. 15, 1.

And should it cost you something of your temporal property to plant and maintain peace, God is rich enough to restore to you all that you may thus lose or sacrifice; and should he not do this temporally, he will richly reward you spiritually, to the welfare of your immortal soul; for his love is of a divine nature and origin. So also a person who, by faith, has become a partaker of the divine nature, will "add to his faith virtue, and to virtue, brotherly kindness and charity. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off," &c. 2 Pet. 1, 5. 7. 9.

A person who is naturally blind would give

all his fortune if he could thereby obtain his sight. But about spiritual sight—the peace and love of God—many a one concerns himself but little, although his whole soul's salvation consists in joy and rest, peace and love. And is it not a great piece of blindness, if we deprive ourselves of the peace of our souls by discord and dissension. But perhaps you say the fault is not in you, but in your neighbor. But your neighbor speaks the same language. And thus each one endeavors to shift the fault from himself, in order that he may throw it upon some one else. But consider for once closely the words: "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and then confess, whether you can, according to the meaning of the Lord, throw the fault on any other person than yourself, if you live in discord and dissension with any one? It is not said that you should demand love of your neighbor, but that you should love him. And if you do not do this, no excuse will avail you at the Day of Judgment; no more than it availed Adam, when he said: "The woman whom thou gavest me, beguiled me." Adam had to suffer the punishment laid on him by the Lord; so "the woman" likewise. Thus has every man to give an account of himself, as to how he endeavored to love God and his neighbor. Christ says: "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." Mark 9, 50. Now peace grows out of love; and where peace and love are wanting, there the main work of godliness is wanting;

whether it be between man and wife, between brother and brother, or between a minister and his congregation; and where there is no love nor peace, there is neither happiness nor prosperity. Discord and uncharitableness are bitter roots, out of which much evil fruit grows. Of these the apostle says: "Look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Heb. 12, 15.

Indeed all the evil fruit that grows out of uncharitableness is not to be described. On the contrary, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor;" as nothing evil can come out of the love of God. Christ says: "Therefore all things whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. 7, 12. "Do that to no man which thou hatest." Tobit 4, 15. Yea, let this be a rule to you from your youth to your old age, that in all your actions you are sincere; without falsehood and deceit. Beware also of all backbiting, whereby the characters of others are traduced; also avoid speaking much of their faults behind their backs. "And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love not false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord." Zech. 8, 17.

In all your conversation be careful, and always speak the truth. Untruth occasions discord and uncharitableness, and is an offspring

of the devil, who is a "liar, and the father of lies." John 8, 44.

Beware also of ridiculing others, or of giving them nicknames; for there is a day coming that shall "burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up." Mal. 4, 1. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." Gal. 6, 7.

Do also not associate with vain company. "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith; and he that hath fellowship with a proud man shall be like unto him." Ecclesiasticus 13, 1. Be also not "wise in your own conceit," (Rom. 12, 16.); and "lean not to your own understanding," (Prov. 3, 5.); nor trust too much to your own wisdom. Begin nothing in your own strength, but give God the glory in all that you do; and do not follow "a multitude to do evil." Ex. 23, 2. Do if you find in your youth an inclination for strong drink, so restrain and deny yourself that it does not become a habit with you. For to what we accustom ourselves in youth is not easily left off in old age. Now out of drunkenness grows much evil; and amongst others also discord and hatred. "Flee" therefore "youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Tim. 2, 22.

Wage war against all evil desires; preserve your feet from all evil steps. For if you give any one occasion to sin, it is already a proof

that you do not walk in love. For "all unrighteousness is sin." 1 John, 5, 17.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof: neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." Rom. 6, 12. 13. "He that is joined to an harlot is one body; but he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." 1 Cor. 6, 16. 17.

Cherish a hatred, and make war, against all rooted vice; and "cleave to that which is good," (Rom. 12, 9.); for pure love loves what is good, and hates what is evil. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." Rom. 12, 10.

All worldly and spiritual matters that come within your calling, "prove" by the word of God; and let this word be your guide during your whole lifetime; for it gives good counsel in all matters. So let the Bible and New Testament also be your chief reading book. "Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." 1 Tim. 6, 20.

"Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Rom. 16, 17. 18.

Again the Lord says: "Wo to the women that sew pillows to all arm-holes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature, to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you? And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley, and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?" Ezek. 13, 18. 19. But the "righteous shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." Isaiah 57, 2.

The love of Christ, which is a general and eternal love, extends to all men; as well to his enemies as to his friends. He suffered his blood to be shed for the sins of the whole world, and also prayed for his enemies: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23, 34. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. 5, 19.

Yes, in the days of his incarnation, Christ set us the pattern of a lamb; and thus by endurance, suffering, and patient submission; yea, by suffering the most painful and ignominious death, on account of us sinners, he gained a triumphant victory over the world, sin, death, and the devil. Even as Peter testifies: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving an example, that ye should follow his steps: who when he was revi-

led, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." 1 Pet. 2, 21. 23.

In him we perceive no envy about religion. He was the wisdom from above, and therefore "without partiality." James 3, 17. He was also "without hypocrisy," and sowed the "fruit of righteousness in peace." Therefore cherish also no envy or hatred about religion towards any person; for in consequence of such envy and hatred much innocent blood has been shed. Endeavor to love every human being, and abhor all sin and sinful actions; and be also no "partaker of other men's sins," (1 Tim. 5, 22.); but endeavor to convince the world rather by your life and conduct than by your words. In your words be also careful; and speak nothing contrary to the foundation of truth. In short, be "wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove." Matt. 10, 16. "If it is possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves." Rom. 12, 18. 19.

If any one "despitefully use you," bear it patiently; and be careful only, that you do not use him so. "Render not evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrary-wise blessing; knowing that ye are called, that ye should inherit the blessing." 1 Pet. 3, 9.

So Christ has also called us, as follows: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matt. 5, 44.

Nature and mere human reason, however, cannot comprehend this doctrine of loving our enemies with a true heart; for the "natual man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2, 14.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. 5, 17. So Christ also says: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." John 15, 4.

"He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John, 2, 6. Now as Christ commanded us to love our enemies, so he also showed by his course of life that he truly loved his enemies. To love our enemies and not to "resist evil," are fruits that grow out of the vine of Christ. But quarrels and wars grow out of the lusts of our sinful "members." The doctrine and deportment of Christ do not allow us to go to war, or to use violence towards our enemies; as John spoke to the soldiers: "Do violence to no man," &c. Luke 3, 14. Under such circumstances then, no true christian can be engaged in military service; not being allowed to "do violence" to any one. Now the prophet did already prophesy of a kingdom of peace—the kingdom of Christ—in which they shall "beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning

hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2, 4. Micah 4, 3.

Further Christ says: "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight," &c. John 18, 36.

The true followers of Christ confess, that they are "strangers and pilgrims on earth," thereby declaring that they "seek a country;" for they "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Heb. 11, 13. 14. 16.

What a great difference there is between the doctrine and deportment of Christ and his apostles, as well as that of the doctrine and deportment of all true christians; and that of the professed followers of Christ at the present day. The former loved the brethren, left their lives for each other, and loved their enemies according to the doctrine and example of the Son of God. Whereas on the other hand, the christians of the present day go to war with one another by thousands, kill and destroy one another in the most horrible manner; and this even such as are of the same religious faith, who boast as holding the true doctrine, and who are united by the sacrament into the same body. But it is not to be believed, that the true body of Christ will injure itself. Further there are, alas! many amongst all religious denominations, who show

by their fruits that they are not true branches of the vine of Christ; inasmuch as one brother belies and defrauds another, and does violence and injustice to him. Indeed it is as the prophet says: "Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." Hab. 1, 3. 4.

"The good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge." Micah 7, 2. 4.

Christ says also of sinners, that they love those who love them. But this is nothing uncommon. Christ however did something uncommon; inasmuch as he loved his enemies. In the law it was commanded: "Love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." This was said "by them of old time"—not by God—but by the fathers under the Old Testament.

Now Christ fulfilled the law when he said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." John 13, 34. Also: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you." Now to walk in this love, as Christ walked therein, is something rare, as well as something impor-

tant. So Christ also further says: "Continue in my love." John 15, 9.

And again: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." John 15, 10. That is, if we love our enemies; if we offer no violence to them; if, when an evil befalls us, we do not resist the same; if we do "good to them that hate us;" "bless them that curse us;" "pray for them which despitefully use us;" if, when any one "sues us at the law, and takes away our coat," we let him have the "cloak also;" if, when any one "smites us on the right cheek," we "turn to him the other also;" if, when any one "takes away our goods," we do not "ask them again;" if, "as we would that men should do to us," we "do to them likewise;" and if we "lend to them of whom we hope nothing again."

Behold, these are all pure fruits that grow on the vine of Christ. He that "abideth in Christ, and Christ in him, shall bring forth much fruit;" but "without him we can do nothing." But he that "abideth not in him is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and cast into the fire." John 15, 5. 6. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John 8, 31.

But in order to become a true disciple of Christ, something very important is yet required as a foundation to the foregoing fruits; namely, a living faith, pure love to Christ, strict self-denial, earnest prayer to God day and night, in

order to obtain strength and grace to keep his words, and to carry out his will; and to overcome all opposition in our nature to a full surrender of the soul to Christ. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death." Rev. 2, 11.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 4, 21.

THIRD ADDRESS,

To the Rising Generation, on Obedience to the Word of God, and a full Surrender of the Soul into his Hands.

In Questions and Answers.

INSTRUCTION FIRST.

Question 1.—I find myself at times under strong convictions of mind, as well as under heavy accusations of conscience; so that I am convinced I cannot stand before God in my present sinful state. Indeed my state is worse than I can express it in words. Nor do I know where to turn to, so as to get good and safe instruction; as I am in want of experience and information in such matters. What then shall I do?

Answer. True and safe instruction is to be obtained only of Christ, our faithful Lord and master; who called the "little children" unto him, (Luke 18, 16.); and who also commanded his disciples: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," &c. Yea, he calls upon all, and says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart:

and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. 11, 28. 29.

Quest. 2. I hear so many calls at the present time, of which some are also very earnest; nevertheless, I see that those who do call are not agreed with one another. Hence it appears to me at times, that there is nothing fundamental any more—nothing whereon one may depend. Besides, every one says: "Only look to Jesus." Is then "Christ divided?"

Ans. Christ says to his disciples: "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone." John 16, 32. Divisions grow out of man's pride and self-will; and these again have a tendency to produce their like in others, namely, pride and self-will. Man's will is born of the flesh, and partakes of the corruption of the rest of his nature. But the "seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," with all his wiles and tricks. "Christ" is therefore not "divided;" for we are "all one in Christ." So John the evangelist well clears up this matter, when he says: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1, 13. There is only one good shepherd of your soul, in whom you may trust with confidence. He is the "way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh to the Father, but by him." John 14, 6.

Quest. 3. The new birth always appears to me a serious and important matter; and there

is in our time much talk and noise about it. Indeed I am convinced that it is a matter that is absolutely necessary to salvation; and I have therefore a strong desire for it. Nevertheless, I am afraid of being deceived. Now can I not be advised, how to obtain it without being deceived and imposed upon?

Ans. The work of the new birth is a wonderful work, and is effected by God in the soul through Christ. But I am not to dictate to God, how he is to go to work to effect the same in you. If you yield yourself up wholly into the hands of God, without resistance, he will commence, and also finish, the work of the new birth in your soul; and not indeed of "corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Pet. 1, 23. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3, 5—7. The new birth takes place in the heart. Therefore the Savior compares it to the wind, which we hear, but cannot see. Wind and water are strong elements, which are serviceable to the preservation of human life. The spiritual wind which Jesus breathes upon the soul, and the water which he offers it, (John 7, 37.) are the gifts of God for the preservation of the life of the soul. "If thou knewest the gift of

God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked him, and he would have given thee living water." John 4, 10. Christ cleansed his church with the "washing of water by the word." Eph. 5, 26. The words of Christ are "spirit and life." John 6, 63. Now if Christ thus cleanses his church, namely, with the "washing of water by the word," then indeed we may say, we are "born of the word and of the Spirit." By the word were all things made that were made. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1, 4. The water that he gives to us, shall be in us a "well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4, 14.

Quest. 4. You speak of the new birth as you read of it in the Bible. But have you no experience of it; so that you can speak of it from experience?

Ans. My experience can help you nothing; nor can your experience help me any thing. Besides, boasting much of ourselves is the work of the "old man." Christ identifies the new birth with the following of him. He says: "Ye which have followed me in the regeneration," &c. Matt. 19, 28. A follower of Christ is in his whole course of life, a "light of the world and a salt to the earth," (Matt. 5, 13, 14.); whereby the "tree is known by its fruit." Which indeed is the only sign whereby the children of God may be known. If you talk much of your experience, and your life shows the con-

trary, you will become a laughing stock before the world, and a hypocrite before God.

Quest. 5. How far may then a person get in the new birth?

Ans. I for my part wish from the heart, that every one might advance further in the new birth than I have done. But the Spirit of God will make the word of God new in your soul, that it will become sharper to you than any "two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4, 12. The new birth as already remarked—takes place in the heart; and in so far as Jesus, the true Word of Life, becomes life and light to your soul, in so far will the thoughts and intents of your heart be changed. And if you thus continue in the work of the new birth, your carnal and sinful nature will be brought into death.

Quest. 6. Can a person born again also yet commit sin?

Ans. You must closely attend to the words of the Savior, and you will see that he makes a distinction in the matter. He says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3, 6. Again Paul says: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." 1 Cor. 15, 45.

50. So Paul also says further: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Rom 7, 18, 20. Again John says: "All unrighteousness is sin." 1 John, 5, 17. Now since in your flesh there "dwelleth no good thing," your corruptible body will scarcely become so pure as to be free from all "unrighteousness." Christ says: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. 26, 41.

But the new birth does not sin, as John says: "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for the seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John, 3, 9. Out of the godly seed which a believing soul receives from Christ in regeneration, no sin certainly grows; but it may grow out of the evil seed which exists in man's nature. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John, 1, 8. 9. So you see that you must well distinguish between the body of the Lord, and the body of sin and death.

Quest. 7. Is then the new birth indispensably necessary to salvation? And is it something great?

Ans. The new birth is something very ne-

cessary, and is a chief article of salvation. For Christ says : "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3, 3. 7. But by being born of God we do not become any thing great in this world; but we obtain the "adoption" which was lost in Adam; as Christ testifies: Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18, 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." Psalm 1, 10. 3.

Christ has given us in his birth a pattern of true humility. Thither, namely, to his manger, we are to direct our course. Indeed he has given us in his birth, doctrine, and life, an example of child-like humility. Those who are born of Christ have become partakers of his nature and virtues. He, "according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope." 1 Pet. 1, 3.

INSTRUCTION SECOND.

Quest. 1. I feel myself burdened in my mind with various thoughts in respect of the many opinions of our times; as each one thinks his own are the best, they being, as he thinks, founded on the truth. Thus then each one, in his opinion, founds his views on the truth; and yet these views are in some respects directly opposed to one another. So I also feel myself at times not altogether at rest, because I have not yet externally united myself with any religious denomination. If I view the word of God, I see that the Lord has a church—has given it a law—and that the primitive christians were under one bond of communion; but at the present time things appear to be in a very bad state, much confused, and greatly in a state of decline. Now can any one give me good evangelical instruction, upon which I can depend?

Ans. I find myself bound in love and compassion towards you, to give you, according to my weakness and humble ability, instruction respecting the matter in question. And as it regards the disunion of which you speak, I would advise you not to concern yourself much about it. For it is with God alone that you have to settle the matter, and not with man. Direct your mind's eye to Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith." For his church is founded on him as the "chief corner-stone." And now that you are resolved on building, dig deep—

dig through the whole sandy foundation of men, and found your building on the rock Jesus Christ. For "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid by Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3, 11.

You must seek the peace of God for yourself, and enter into communion with the Father and the Son. Do not seek the Son in his person at Jerusalem, nor yet on the mountain, but "worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4, 23. Then if you have found the true foundation, namely, the anchor that will ever keep your soul, then be no more "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine; but speaking the truth in love, grow up in Christ in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Eph. 4, 14. 15. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." Heb. 13, 9.

Quest. 2. I am strongly convinced from the word of God, that I should externally unite myself with some religious denomination; yet I am not altogether clear in the matter for different reasons: First, I am somewhat fearful to enter into external connection with a church, as I am afraid I might thereby be bound to much under human laws and rules. Secondly, because my love of liberty is very strong. Now what shall I do, so as to overcome this fear and timidity, and this my love of liberty?

Ans. Only give place to your convictions from the word of God, and let that be your rule during your whole lifetime. "The gospel which

was preached by me (says Paul) is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. 1, 11. 12.; Rom. 1, 16.

Examine well this "fear and timidity" of which you speak—of being too much bound "under human laws and rules"—and consider whence they originate, and to what they will lead you. The apostle Peter speaks of such as have forsaken the "right way": "They speak great swelling words of vanity," and promise others "liberty while they themselves are the servants of corruption." 2 Pet. 2, 15. 18. 19. Indeed, the liberty of which you speak may become an occasion of sin to you, (Gal. 5, 13.) or a "cloak of unrighteousness," or a "stumbling-block to them that are weak." 1 Cor. 8, 9. There are many dangers in the freedom that you may thus claim. The Lord complains: "For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress." &c. Jer. 2, 20. Nor are you bound in embracing religion to submit to human laws. You are only bound to submit to the doctrines of Christ and his apostles.

Quest. 3. It appears to me that the church is in a very declining state—very destitute of love. For I observe amongst its members scarcely any better examples than amongst those who belong to no church. But if I knew of a church that consisted of none but awakened, enlightened, and regenerated persons, standing in the bond

of pure love,—with such a one I would unite. Now can any one recommend to me such a church—a church with which I might unite with safety ?

Ans. David says : "Before I was afflicted, I went astray ; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted ; that I might learn thy statutes." Psalm 119, 67. 71. Now to an humbled soul it always appears that all others are better than it is itself. For in consequence of its humility, it esteems others higher than itself. So I have also observed, that unfruitful members of the church have always most to say about its decline. If you have once rightly learned to know your own sinful and impure heart, you will find enough to do with yourself. But if there were a church without a fault, and you and I would unite therewith ; then still there would be two imperfect members belonging to it. "For" (says (James) in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in words, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." James 3, 2.

INSTRUCTION THIRD.

Quest. 1. I am convinced from the word of God, that the baptism of adults is the right baptism—the baptism which Christ has instituted. For he says: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 28, 19. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Mark 16, 16. Thus Christ puts teaching and believing before baptism, the latter of which acts cannot be performed by infants, but only by adults. But as those who uphold adult baptism are separated into different parties; and this for the reason that they administer baptism differently; therefore I would like to know what is the right and true baptism. By some immersion is recognized as the right baptism, and none other. By others again, pouring. And both of these modes are again differently administered. Now if I receive baptism, I am desirous of receiving the right baptism, the baptism sanctioned by the words and example of our Savior. Now how shall I learn to know what is the right baptism?

Ans. Examine the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, in which they treat of baptism; and rather follow them than all other received customs. And then according to this doctrine I am willing to administer baptism unto you.

Quest. 2. Shall then the candidate for baptism instruct the one who is to baptize him, how to

administer baptism? Does not Christ say to his apostles: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you?" Matt. 28, 20.

Ans. If I am to instruct you in baptism, I must instruct you according to the dictates of my conscience, as I am convinced from the word of God; and so it is the duty of others also to do. But observe—and with an impartial mind—that I do not want to dictate to you, but only to call your attention to an examination of the subject, for yourself. John says: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." Matt. 3, 11. "I indeed have baptized you with water," &c. Mark 1, 8. "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Luke 3, 16. "I baptize you with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not." John 1, 26. "But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." John 1, 33. "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1, 5. Now if John baptized with water, Christ was also baptized by him with water in Jordan; and he again commanded us to "teach and baptize." But if you ask, how did John baptize? I answer with water. Now examine these words more closely

than you have yet done, and consider well what is to be made of them. Water is the medium wherewith baptism is administered. John baptizes with water, and Christ with the Holy Spirit; and that by pouring out the Spirit, as we expressly read, (Acts 2, 17.) "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." Here baptism is called in plain language, *pouring*. Nor can, in my opinion, the words "baptized with water," be so construed as to mean plunging or dipping; as the words "baptizing" and "plunging" (or dipping) are in our German translation, two distinct words; as is to be seen, (Luke 16, 24.): "And send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue." Again Christ says on the occasion of his supper with his disciples: "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." John 13, 26. Now if these were connected with baptism, or baptism recorded instead of "dipping," I would be convinced that immersion was the right mode of baptism. But now the words in question are two words. Nor do I view baptism as a means whereby the "old man" is brought into death. This must be effected by regeneration, or internal baptism, of which external baptism is only the sign.

Quest. 3. Is not the meaning of the Greek word *bapto*, (from which the English word to *baptize* is derived,) to *dip*, to *plunge*, or *immerse?* And have we not reason to believe that immersion was the baptism practised in the primitive church?

Ans. I trust that the German translation of the Bible is a sufficient guide to salvation; that if we follow its directions in humility, love, and sincerity, we may, by the grace of God, obtain salvation. Besides, however, translators are not agreed as to the meaning of the Greek word *bapto.* In a Dutch Dictionary of four languages, published at Amsterdam (in the Refferstein Printing Office) in the year 1634, this word is translated "sprinkling with water" or "pouring."

In histories on baptism, we indeed read of immersion; but we also read of the contrary. For example, in a history on baptism, published in the year 68, there is an account of two daughters being baptized by the minister Hermogatus at a running stream. These two daughters were born of christian parents. In the year A. D. 251, three learned men went over to the christian faith, and sent for the minister Justinian, praying him to be baptized. Justinian was rejoiced at such learned men submitting to the yoke of Christ; began to instruct them; and thereon ordered water to be brought, and baptized them on the confession of their faith. Again, in the year A. D. 370, Aptetus Milevatus taught: "Paul hath planted, Apollos hath watered; Paul made the heathen to disciples of Christ, Apollos baptized them." It is also mentioned, that this (sprinkling) was the mode of baptism about the year 383, at Jerusalem; and that it remained so for a long time in

many countries. According to this mode, the candidates for baptism were baptized in or at streams of water; they descended partly or wholly into the water, and again ascended out of the same. But as Clemens spoke already in earlier times, namely, in the year 95, of heretical baptism, and advised such as had received such baptism, should be rebaptized; therefore Dionysius wrote in the year 126, an entire book concerning the different modes of baptism, and dedicated it to the Bishop of Cesarea. In this book he makes mention of a man who was present when baptism was administered; and that on hearing the questions put to the candidates, and their answers thereto, he confessed that he had been baptized by heretics quite differently, and requested to be baptized in the right way. Now from this it is to be inferred, that baptism was already in the first centuries administered differently, by the christians of that time. Therefore you are also not bound to receive any rules respecting it, except those of Christ and his apostles.

Qnest. 4. But does not Paul say: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him in baptism into death," &c. Rom. 6, 5. 4. Now how do you understand this?

Ans. Christ "died for our sins according to the scriptures," (1 Cor. 15, 3.) and thus established by his sufferings and death the whole

New Testament. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For "a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." Heb. 9, 16. 17. The whole covenant of grace of the New Testament is established in the death of Christ Jesus. And no man "disannulleth or addeth to a man's covenant, if it be confirmed." Gal. 3, 15. So then not only the commandment of baptism, but all the commandments of the New Testament, are established by the death of Christ. Christ calls his shedding of blood and suffering withal a baptism, when he says: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am straitened till it be accomplished" Luke 12, 50. The Old Testament was figurative, and was sprinkled with blood. For when "Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people," (Heb. 9, 19.) and said: "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Exodus 24, 8.

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission," (Heb. 9, 22.); and yet this "could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings," &c. v. 9, 10. Indeed, it served only as a figurative,

bodily purification; "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." v. 13, 14. Yea, the blood of Christ is the only right and proper means of purification, which "cleanseth us of all our sins," if we become united to him by baptism, obey his commandments, follow his life, and thus bury our old Adam with him in death.

Baptism belongs to the entrance into the covenant of grace. Repentance being the first letter, baptism is an addition thereto, and has reference to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, as John says: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood: and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear record in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." 1 John, 5, 6—8. Thus then the spirit, the water, and the blood, "agree in one," as witnesses on earth. The Spirit is represented as being poured out; and Moses, as already remarked, used water and blood for sprinkling the people, as a figure of the external purification. So the apostle also says of the faithful, (Heb.

12, 24.): "Ye are come to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Now the baptism into the death of Christ, (Rom. 6, 3.) is an important and serious baptism. For in this baptism we make a covenant with God to be faithful unto him even "unto blood." And as there can be no reconciliation without the shedding of blood, this covenant leads you to the shedding of the blood of the ram of sin, the crucifying of your inborn sinful nature. Yea, to the "presenting of our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," &c. Rom. 12, 1. Indeed, the whole covenant of grace leads us to the bearing of our cross daily, to the denying of ourselves, to "dying daily," and to the yielding up of our souls wholly into the hands of our God, so that we deliver ourselves over from our own hands into the hands of God, and are thus no more our own, but his "who died for us."

Quest. 5. Is not baptism sometimes called a "washing of water," or a burying?

Ans. I, in my simplicity, can no where find, that baptism is called a "washing of water." The apostle indeed speaks, (Eph. 5, 26.) of the "washing of water by the word." But he does not mention a word about baptism. Again he further says, (Tit. 3, 5. 6.): "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." Now these words we will briefly

consider in the fear of God. And so we are then "buried with Christ by baptism into death." Now the burial of Christ is not described as having been like our burial of the dead. For the grave of Jesus was a new grave, which a rich man got hewn out of a rock; it had a door whereby it could be entered, and was consequently not covered with earth. Matt. 27, 57. 60. Further, Nicodemus came, and "brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred weight." Whereupon they "took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." John 19, 39. 40. He suffered death with malefactors, and was buried (entombed) like the rich. (In a similar manner the rich of our time are also frequently entombed.) But why "seek the living among the dead? He is not here; but is risen," whereby we see, that "like as he was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. 6, 4. It is further to be seen, (1 Cor. 15, 29.) that some were "baptized for the dead." "But (says Paul) if the dead rise not at all, why are they baptized for the dead?" So we also find in ancient writings, that persons were baptized over the dead, that is, over their graves. But he who seeks the life that comes from God, in baptism, or in any other external works, will find himself deceived. For salvation is to be found only in Christ Jesus; and those only become partakers of it, who die unto themselves and every thing sinful; as a person who is always laying the foundation of a building

will not get it perfected. Therefore do not dwell too much upon external matters; for they are only "shadows of things to come;" but these "shadows" are nevertheless not to be despised; because they are shadows of things of great importance.

By some too much importance is attached to water-baptism; by others it is valued too little. Scorners, revilers, and despisers, there are indeed many in our days; and this particularly, as many of the doctrines now taught are tainted with a false spirit of liberty. But you I would advise to remain on the right path, and to follow the lamb in your baptism wherever it leads you. Think of his baptism of suffering, and ask yourself the question, whether you are willing to drink of the cup that he drank of, and to be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized. Matt. 20, 23. This baptism of suffering is an exalted baptism; which you must view with spiritual eyes. For as "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3, 14. 15.

In him we have pardon, namely, salvation through his blood. So we also read: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in all assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Heb. 10, 22. But if you do not obtain an inward sprinkling, an outward one will avail you little. "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him." Isaiah 52, 15.

INSTRUCTION FOURTH.

Quest. 1. Before I unite with your church, I would like to have full instruction about all your questions and rules; as also about your ground and articles of faith; so that I might have time and opportunity to examine them by the word of God, in order to see whether they agree with the same. Now whither shall I go, so that I may obtain true instruction about this matter?

Ans. This instruction I am willing to give you according to my knowledge and humble ability. The principles of our church enjoin humility, as well in doctrine as in a pious life and conversation; and if these principles are departed from, the principles of the founders of the Christian Church are departed from. The only bond of our united brotherhood is the bond of love. And if this is broken, all other alliances are broken, and the brotherhood is dissolved. Further, the growth of our church depends on the blessing and grace of God; and "every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matt. 15, 13. Again, in our day the church is subject to much scorn and contempt; and in the time of our forefathers it was subject to much persecution; yea, to tortures, crosses, tribulation, and distress. Now if you make application to be received into this despised church, and desire to be baptized, you are directed to repentance, faith in Christ, and love to God. You are reminded, that the step

which you are about to take—your building upon the ground just mentioned—is a matter of importance; that you should "sit down first and count the cost, whether you have sufficient to finish" what you undertake. Luke 14, 28. Further you will be reminded what baptism implies; namely, that it does not imply the "putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." 1 Pet. 3. 21. Now if you intend to enter into this covenant with God, you must renounce the world and its sinful practices, all places of vain amusement, and sinful company, deny yourself, take up the cross, and become a follower of Christ. "Then Jacob said unto his household and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise and go to Bethel." Gen. 35, 2. 3. Now the reason of Jacob's doing this, is plainly to be inferred from the previous chapter. He was convinced in his heart, that his sons had not only incurred guilt on account of the men at Sichem, but that they had also in their wrath sinned against God; and in consequence of this he stood in fear and anxiety. In this condition he knew no other way than again to become reconciled to God, in order again to come under his protection. He therefore adopted the means of purifying himself, and of laying aside all those things with which the Lord was displeased. And as the pomp and show with which men decorate their

bodies arise out of an impure and proud heart, and are an abomination in the sight of God, as well as idolatry; therefore Jacob took "all their strange gods, and all their ear-rings" and buried them. Gen. 34, 30.; 35, 4.; Amos 6, 8.; Mark 7, 22. 23.

Again Christ was born at Bethlehem, and laid in a manger, as an example to us of true humility. Now if your conduct has the appearance of conformity to this world, whether this be in clothing or other matters, you will be admonished respecting the same; and you will also be asked, whether you are willing to be instructed by the doctrine of Christ and his apostles? And if you answer in the affirmative, your desire of becoming a member of the church will, in its order, be laid before the same, and they will be enjoined to watch over your course of life, and to admonish you, if they should find it necessary.

Quest. 2. I am aware that you sometimes hold secret conversations with such as intend to join your church, particularly with the young. Have you then any thing to talk with such that not every one may hear?

Ans. We have nothing in our church, either in the instruction of the young, or any thing else, that the whole world may not know. The young indeed are sometimes requested, in a private manner, to state what has induced them to desire to become members of the church? So there are also questions arranged for the pur-

pose of instructing them; and all this because some persons are at times too bashful to answer for themselves before many people. Such persons are also for a while instructed in the will and word of God, to exercise themselves therein, and to become obedient to the same, according to the command of Christ: "Teach and baptize them." Matt. 28, 19. So they are also sometimes charged to commit to memory certain chapters and verses of scripture; as for instance, the 1st Psalm; Rom. 12, 1. 2.; Eph. 4, 22—32.; 5, 1—12.; yea, according to the gifts, zeal, and knowledge of the minister who instructs them.

When then these candidates for the church are for a while thus proceeded with, a meeting of inquiry is held, to ascertain whether any one has any thing against one or the other of them. If there is then no complaint entered, those who desire to be baptized can have the same administered to them; inasmuch as the covenant with Christ is a free covenant. For he says: "Whosoever will let him come," &c. And again: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart," &c.

Quest. 3. What other questions are then yet made before baptism, and to what are those joining the church bound? I have been told that they are asked questions about many things, and have to promise a great deal. Have I been rightly informod about the matter?

Ans. I will lay one thing after another be-

fore you. Then you may "prove all things; and hold fast that which is good." Our whole ground of faith will be laid before you, as we understand it; and you will be asked, whether you are agreed therewith, or not? If you are not agreed therewith, you had better remain where you are, than to accept a thing with which you are not agreed in your heart. But if you once agree with the church and her ground of faith, then you are in duty bound to be and remain faithful to God and the church until death. It will be further shown to you from Matt. 5, 33—37.: "Ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of a great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black." And the apostle James says further: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." James 5, 12. So we find ourselves bound by the word of God, not to swear an oath; nor be guilty of any other kind of swearing, or taking the "name of God in vain." "For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Exodus 20, 7. So Christ has also forbidden all

revenge and defence by force, whereby to wage war with our enemies; which was allowed to "them of old." But this practice, as just said, Christ has abolished; because his kingdom is a kingdom of peace. Consequently we are not allowed to "resist evil."

We also confess a state of matrimony of two believing persons, according to the institution of Christ. Matt. 19, 4—6. These persons being by the providence of God brought together and united into one flesh; and being first espoused to the bridegroom of their souls, Christ, according to the direction in Ephesians 5, 22—31.; and being further members of the same church, (and thus under the same church covenant,) and of "one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Matt. 19, 6. But if such marriage is to take place according to the will of God, then repentance, faith, obedience, and a surrender to God must have already taken place with the parties; and the marriage state be thus begun in the Lord, according to the advice of Paul. 1 Cor. 7, 39. So such marriage is also to take place with the counsel, knowledge, and will of parents, and the ministers and elders of the church.

Quest. 4. But how comes it that there is such a rule—that one is only allowed to marry amongst members of one's own church? Are there not also many pious, discerning christians, who do not belong to such church?

Have we ground in the word of God thus to do?

Ans. There were twelve tribes in Israel. Now which of these tribes was the most acceptable to the Lord, I know not; though one may have been more so than another. Yet the Lord did not permit one tribe to intermarry with another, as is to be seen, (Numbers 36, 6—8.): "This is the thing which the Lord doth command, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their fathers shall they marry: so shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe; for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father," &c. Now in the first world the inhabitants followed their own will in this matter, contrary to the "Spirit" of God, and "took them wives of all which they choose." Gen. 6, 2. And Christ says, it will again be in the latter days as it was in the time of Noah. But it was particularly, because carnal-minded youth is encouraged by such as are of reputation, or in authority, that it was displeasing to the Lord, that one tribe should intermarry with another. But a still greater displeasure did the Lord bear to the children of Israel intermarrying with heathen nations. This he absolutely forbade them. He says: "Neither shalt thou make

marriage with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son; lest their daughters make thy sons go a whoring after their gods." Deut. 7, 3.; Exodus 34, 16. Now I say, consider well what the Lord says in these quotations. But further, Israel did not long abide in the law of the Lord. For they "took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and did evil in the sight of the Lord." Judges 3, 6. 7. And "the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this tresspass." Ezra 9, 2. Further I would recommend you to consider the 12th article in our small Confession of Faith, and the 25th in the large one. So the order in Matt. 18, 15. will also be laid before you: "If thy brother shall tresspass against the, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Matt. 18, 15—17. This is an order which the Lord himself has instituted between brethren; and which we are bound to enforce, both as it regards ourselves and others. Entire obedience is further required in every thing that is conducive to the glory of God and the welfare of

the church; while at the same time ministers and elders are appointed by the brotherhood for the service of the church.

Quest. 5. What questions are then asked in connection with baptism? Indeed I have heard them, but have forgotten them again. So I also see that the covenant of baptism is poorly kept by many. And again I have observed, that the questions asked by ministers in administering baptism, are not always the same. Have they possibly a different signification?

Ans. Although the questions are not by all put in the same way, yet is their import the sume; so that in the whole there is no difference in them. The whole ground of the covenant of baptism may be taken as follows:

1. As Christ commanded to baptize believers, you will be interrogated about your faith, whether you believe in an Almighty God, who created heaven and earth, and all other things visible, and preserves the same by his power; and in Christ Jesus his only begotten Son; that he is the true Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior, who died for us on the cross; and in a Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, and who leads us into all truth, and puts us in mind of all that the Son has said?

2. As Christ says no one can serve two masters, are you willing to renounce Satan, the world, your own will, and all other dark and satanical works?

3. Will you pledge yourself to be obedient to

the doctrines of Christ, as Moses said: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." Acts 3, 22.; Deut. 18, 15. Thus we are bound to be obedient and faithful to the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, even "unto blood;" as also to administer the order in Matt. 18, 15. 16. amongst the members of the church, (yourselves included, if you are one,) in humility and love. And then if you are willing to comply with such regulations and doctrine you will be received as a member into the church.

Quest. 6. Now that you insist from beginning to end, on obedience to Christ, in external as well as internal matters, I am surprised, that you do not direct those who desire to be baptized, to be baptized in the water; inasmuch as Christ himself was thus baptized: and John also was thus baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there. John 3, 23. So also Philip and the eunuch went down into the water," &c. Acts 8, 38. What is then properly the commandment about baptism?

Ans. The only commandment about baptism given by Christ is recorded in Matt. 28, 19.; and is briefly as follows: "Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" to which there is no commandment added that people should go into the water to be baptized. And where "there is no law, there is no transgression." Rom. 4, 15. Nor

is it allowed to add any thing to, or take any thing from the commandments of God. For the Lord says: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Deut. 4, 2. "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Prov. 30, 6. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. 22, 18. 19. So I can give no further doctrine nor instruction to the young, than to recommend to them the commandment of Christ, who is our true teacher. In instituting the remembrance of his bitter sufferings and death, Christ took bread and wine, thanked his heavenly Father and said: "This do in remembrance of me." Luke 22, 19. Now we are bound in duty and love to do to one another, as he did to his disciples. Now at the washing of feet he said to his disciples: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13, 15. Now such expressions we do not find in connection with his baptism. But should any one—as Christ was baptized in Jordan—from humility and love to him, desire to be baptized in the

water "with water," as John baptized—in order to be in this respect "like him," (Christ) I would have nothing against it. A certain teacher says—to be seen in a history on baptism of the year A. D. 438)—"The sacrifice is washed when we are sprinkled with water in baptism." Alcimus compares baptism with the blood and water which issued from the side of Christ. (A. D. 500.)

Quest. 7. Is one church to be preferred to another?

Ans. I do not venture to say that our church has any preference to others. For Paul says: "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor. 10, 18. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Prov. 27, 2.

We have also nothing to boast respecting baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the washing of feet, and other external matters; for the Savior says: "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." Luke 17, 10.

Salvation is so precious, that it cannot be merited by works; for Paul says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of words, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2, 8. 9. When there "arose a reasoning among" the disciples of Christ, "which of them should be the greatest," he represented to them the state

of little children, and commanded them to receive the kingdom of God as such, else they should not "enter therein." Luke 9, 46.; Mark 10, 15. "For whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." Matt. 23, 12.

Quest. 8.—Having learned from your doctrine, that no force is thereby allowed, in any case whatever; in what light then is the power of worldly government viewed by you? For such government being instituted by God himself, may we not then use the same, if wrong is done unto us, or for the purpose of collecting just debts?

Ans. You must well attend to the reason for which government was instituted; namely, to punish the bad, and protect the good; and it is a wise regulation in this corrupt world. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," &c. Rom. 13, 1. So we should also pray God, that he may give wisdom and understanding to government to make a right use of the power with which he has entrusted it; namely to punish what is evil, and protect what is good. And when we are then under God's blessing protected by government, we are in duty bound to be thankful to God and it for such protection; as also to pay "tribute" to the same, which is its due, and which is serviceable to peace. But as the whole doctrine of Christ leads into a course of self-denial, and separation from the world, Christ makes a distinction between the practice

of worldly governments and that of his true followers. He says: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Luke 22, 25. 26. So Christ says further to his disciples: "But whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." Mark 10, 43. 44. Not as "being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. 5, 3. Government is not instituted that the true followers of Christ should rule over any one thereby. But that they should be "servants" and "ministers," is in accordance with the doctrine of Christ, as well as with his course of life; as also that of a pilgrim on earth. Indeed I would rather lose something, than to use force against any one by law.

Quest. 9. Is also expulsion from the church, under any circumstances, necessary? I have heard remarks against it, to the effect, that one had no right to put any one out of the church. I have also heard heavy complaints from such as have been expelled, that injustice was done to them. Were it not better then, in order to avoid such complaints and ill reports, to let the tares grow till the time of harvest?

Ans. We are bound in all cases to take the word of God as our guide, and therewith to

manage according to our knowledge and best ability; and then to bear all the ignominy and contempt that may befall us; for Christ says: "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," &c. Luke 6, 26. Indeed the world hated Christ himself; for he testified of it, that the works thereof were "evil." John 7, 7. Yea, let one only once begin earnestly to testify against evil works, and there will soon be complaints and reproach enough. Between brethren Christ has instituted a regulation, according to which we are to act, (Matt. 18, 15—17.) and also teaches (Mark 7, 21. 22.) what are out-breaking sins; namely, "adulteries, covetousness, pride," and the like. And the apostles have further given advice how to act with such as are guilty of such sins. Paul says: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or extortioner; with such an one not to eat." 1 Cor. 5, 11. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." 2 Thes. 3, 6. "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." (v. 14.) "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." 2 John, v. 10. "A man that is an

heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." Tit. 3, 10. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." 1 Cor. 5, 13.

Now here you can see in plain words, that Christ and his apostles did, by the Spirit of God, institute a reception of members into the church, and under certain circumstances, an expulsion from the same. And those who speak against this rule of the church, are generally despisers of true religion. So also the complaints of those who are expelled, generally proceed from an ungrateful, self-willed, and self-righteous mind.

WARNING AGAINST BACKSLIDING.

Now if you have ever bent your knees before God, and united with the church, and made a vow unto the Lord; then "give all diligence" to be faithful unto him; watch and pray daily and hourly, and resist the enemy in faith. After Christ was baptized, he was "led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." Matt. 4, 1. Now if Christ was thus "tempted," how much more will the enemy assail us with manifold temptations; and the more so, as we bear a sinful nature in our flesh and blood, and the "sin which doth so easily beset us," is so apt to make us slothful. Again, after you have, by the internal light of your soul, learned to know your sins and the depravity of your heart, and entered on the narrow way of self-denial, in order to become a true follower of Jesus; yea, have taken upon yourself the yoke of Christ, to seek "rest" for your soul; then "give all diligence" thus to continue. For the crown is not at the beginning; but "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Again: "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Nor do, like Lot's wife, look back towards Sodom, nor with the children of Israel towards Egypt. But "run with patience the race that is before you." Nor do again yield to the lusts and sins in which you formerly walked; but

"put off" more and more, from day to day, the "old man," which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and pray the Lord that he may more and more enlighten and renew your heart; yea, as you "have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him." Think also what a heavy accountability will follow thereon, if you make a covenant with God—pledging yourself to be faithful to him—and then again become unfaithful; as I have alas! seen many—even such in whom I observed a true conviction of sin, a true awakening from the sleep of the same; yea, a proper knowledge of themselves; yet, who, alas! by degrees declined from this state—some even falling into a life of notorious sin and vice; some again into quarrels, brawls, and disputes; others into adultery and fornication, pomp and haughtiness, gluttony and intemperance, and other outbreaking sins; while nevertheless the Lord says: "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." Ezek. 18, 24. The first drawings of grace are the best; "keep" therefore "that which is committed to your trust;" "occupy" well thy "pound," that thou mayst not be found an "unprofitable servant," and even that be taken away from thee

"which thou hast," and thou be cast into "outer darkness," into the "lake of fire, burning with brimstone;" which is the "second death." May the Lord in mercy lead us through this world of tribulation, strengthen our faith, and increase our knowledge, and preserve us unto a happy end.

THE HOLY TEN COMMANDMENTS.

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought the out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

First Commandment.

Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

Second Commandment.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Third Commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Fourth Commandment.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant,

nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not steal.

NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's. Exodus 20.

APOSTOLIC CONFESSION OF FAITH.*

I believe in God, the Father, Almighty Creator of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary.

Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, being crucified, died, and was buried.

Rose from the dead on the third day.

Ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God the Almighty Father.

Whence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

I believe in a General Christian Church, the Communion of Saints.

Forgiveness of sins.

Resurrection of the body.

And eternal life. Amen.

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* The Apostolic Confession of Faith was not written by the apostles themselves, but afterwards composed by the church. Nevertheless it is called the "Symbolum" of the apostles, as it is an abridgment of their doctrine.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. Matt. 6, 9—13.

MORNING PRAYER.

Merciful God and Father! Thou hast again permitted the Sun of Nature to rise on the "evil and on the good." Praise and thanks be unto thee, O gracious God! for thy fatherly grace, and for the protection and blessings which I have enjoyed during this night. Permit me also to enjoy thy blessing during this day; and enlighten my dark heart with the light of thy grace; so that I may fully learn to understand and know my own frailties and faults. Yea, take me this day under the protection of thy grace; fill my heart with thy divine love, and with true humility and self-abasement; strengthen my faith, and cause me to grow in every thing that is good from day to day; impress also deeply on my mind my perishable and transient state; so that I may be constantly on my guard. Yea, set thy Holy Spirit as a watchman over my heart, mind, and thoughts; so that if this day should

be my last in this world of tribulation, I may be found watching; and so be prepared to "enter into rest." So I commend myself into thy hands with body and soul; and every thing that I have; so that nothing may be mine any more, but every thing thine. In tribulation and necessity, grant me patience; in temptation, firmness and strength; and in prosperous and healthy days, a thankful heart. And finally, preserve me from all evil in time and in eternity, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

Praise and thanks be unto thee, O almighty God and Father! for thy protection and blessing, and all the good that I have enjoyed during the day now past. I would fain enter into the closet of my heart, and worship thee in spirit and in truth; but it is still so full of impurity; for I have been burdened on this day with many scattered thoughts; nor have I, in my life and actions, done the best—for I am full of faults and imperfections, poor and miserable. But although I am but "dust and ashes," I have nevertheless ventured to call upon thy holy name; and I pray and entreat thee, O my God! to pardon all my iniquities and faults, wherewith I have offended thee! Purify my heart of all carnal and worldly desires; and fill me with thy Holy Spirit! Also enlighten me with thy gracious light; so that I may know myself, as well

as see my secret faults in thy light. Make my heart truly tender and penitent; yea, effect in my soul, through grace, true repentance; impart unto me true, living, and saving faith; kindle in my soul the fire of divine love; and let it glow and burn till all my selfishness and self-righteousness are consumed! I also pray for all men—for all poor, ungrateful sinners—for all my enemies and adversaries, for all sick persons, for all widows and such as are forsaken; for thou knowest the wants of every one of them; and mayst thou therefore help every one who needs thy help! And now I lay down my body in the arms of thy grace and mercy, and commend myself, body and soul, into thy hands; protect me through thy holy angels; bless me, and preserve me from all evil, whether I am asleep or awake; teach me to consider my nothingness and my death; and finally receive my immortal soul into eternal joy and rest! This I pray of thee, O almighty God and Father! in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYER OF A PENITENT SINNER.

O Lord! thou almighty and powerful God! In my necessity I turn unto thee, and call upon thee in the name of Jesus Christ: Have mercy upon me, for I find myself burdened with sin and uncleanness! My thoughts are scattered, and too much earthly and wordly. So I also find little power truly to repent; my desires and in-

clinations to evil being so strong, and my love and inclination to what is good so weak. Therefore I come unto thee as a burdened sinner, and prostrate myself before the throne of thy mercy, at thy footstool with a bowed down heart, in the hope, that thou wilt hear my prayer, and receive me under the protection of thy grace; for I acknowledge that I am dust and ashes! Of myself I have no power to do what is good, and to leave off what is evil. All good gifts come from thee, therefore take away from me my evil carnal-minded heart, and give me a new and discerning heart, and a truly penitent mind; fill me with thy Holy Spirit; anoint me through and through with thy divine love, O thou Eternal Wisdom! make thy word truly alive and powerful in my soul, through true faith; make me free from all bonds and fetters in which I still find myself here and there bound; lead and conduct me the right way to eternal happiness; and guard me against, and preserve me from, all evil in time—till eternity! Amen.

EDIFYING REFLECTIONS FOR THE SICK.

"As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth: for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." Psalm 103, 15. 16. To know the nothingness of man by one's self through the Spirit of God, is *one*

thing ; and to choose Jesus Christ, the highest good and life of the soul, as its better part, is the *other thing* that is necessary for us and all mortals to salvation. Vain and transitory are all things on earth; all flesh and all men, who often live so secure. We appear and pass away; bloom and fall off; and in a few years we too are here no more. "Few," says Jacob to Pharaoh, "are the days of our pilgrimage;" "few and evil" are the days of our lives. Gen. 47, 9. Everywhere in nature, where we cast our eyes, as well as in ourselves, we see and perceive only objects of dissolution, of destruction, perishableness, and mortality. The earth itself, which hastens towards its destruction, and which, as Paul says, "groaneth to be delivered from the bondage of corruption," is not the abiding place of our destiny; but heaven, the fatherland of glorified saints. Here we are only strangers, passing pilgrims to the justly praised land of Canaan; who, tired of the laboriousness of earth and life, in consequence of the heat and burden which we have to bear in the wilderness of time, long for the "habitation of God through the spirit," for the "courts of the Lord." Psalm 84, 3.

One of the best pictures, which portrays before our eyes, and impresses upon our minds, in the most lively manner, the nothingness of man, is given by Peter, in alluding to the fading nature of grass and flowers. For "all flesh," says he, "is as grass," &c.; which means that all

creatures in general, but more particularly man, are mortal, very perishable; yea, nothing more than a "vapor" dispersed by the air; a bubble scattered by the water.

We resemble the grass of the field, that is green to-day, and "withereth" to-morrow; a flower that blossoms in the morning, fades, and falls away in the evening. 1 Pet. 1, 24. In short, what is the whole glory of man here on earth? Youth, blooming, healthy days; possessing this world's goods; living every day in pride and pleasure? But is not all this vain?—in a few years, and often in a few days, transitory? "The days of our years" (the Psalmist says) "are three score and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Psalm 90, 10. Again: "Their imagination of things to come, and the day of death, trouble their thoughts, and cause fear of heart." Ecclesiasticus 40, 2.

The grass and flowers which we see blooming in nature to-day, and withering to-morrow, are eloquent teachers of our nothingness, and preachers to us of our mortality. "Look at us," they say in the evening, "we rose early in the morning in a splendor in which "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed." But the sun "was no sooner risen with a burning heat," than we withered, and our beautiful form was spoiled." James 1, 11.

Consider, O man! this true picture of thy

life, and learn to know thyself. To know thyself is wisdom that makes you wise; yea, to die unto sin before we die; to become partakers of the life of God before we approach death, the coffin, and the grave; and eternity overtakes us, is true wisdom!

In prosperity and happy days, such considerations and the self-denial connected therewith, appear hard to sensual persons; that is, not to seek "things visible," but "things invisible."

When all things go well with us, we think with Peter on Mount Tabor: "It is good for us to be here; let us build (*lasting*) tabernacles;" and forget thereby that we are dying mortals, that we carry the seed and germ of death in all our members, and are every hour ripe for the harvest, whenever it is the will of the great Creator to apply the sickle of death. But we often believe with that evil servant: "My Lord delayeth his coming," (Matt. 24, 48.); "our houses shall continue forever, and our dwelling-places to all generations." Psalm 49, 11.

God wills, God seeks our salvation; therefore "his thoughts" are often not "our thoughts," nor his ways agreeable to the flesh. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." Heb. 12, 11. Crosses, sufferings, and sickness, are exhortations of a loving God, exhortations that we should not forget him; admonitions of death;

which we would otherwise lose sight of; awakenings to a heartfelt veneration of God; to repentance, holiness, and purification from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." Indeed, experience has proved in this instance, that he who has not yet tasted sufferings, who has experienced no crosses, has not yet been richly blessed of God. He who has not yet been sick, has most likely not yet earnestly considered the vanity of human life, not yet "set his house in order"—not yet prepared for death.

The goods of earth are as inconstant, as vain and perishable, as we are ourselves; they pass away, and we with them; and this frequently when we consider ourselves in the best enjoyment of them—when we think with that secure rich man: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But while we thus think, the Lord and Creator of our lives says: "It is enough, render up thy goods; give an account of the goods and gifts entrusted to thee; for thou mayest be no longer steward; this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

The better treasures of heaven, which are subject to no change nor inconstancy—the good and durable treasure there secured—the glorious portion and inheritance prepared for us—the glory in the city of the living God—the blissful view of his holy face—ever to satisfy and refresh ourselves in Jesus and the supper of the Lamb—and to receive from his hands the

crown of life:—these holy treasures of God, which the world neither has, nor can give; these must be the only wish, the only object of our hearts, the earnest desire of our souls, when God in his wise counsel and will, lays us on a bed of affliction, pain, and sickness. The more the perishable treasures of this earth, which are only trifles and uncertainties, and often yet produce sorrow to our minds,—recede from us, the more constantly and perseveringly should we "seek the things which are above," where thou Lord Jesus, thyself, art our highest and eternal good.

This "good part," which a Mary, seeking salvation and an understanding of the word of God, at the feet of Jesus, chose,—the divine doctrines—the sweet honey-dew of his grace—which flowed like a mild rain and precious balsam on her thirsty soul, from the gracious lips of Jesus;—gave her such a foretaste of these glorious treasures of heaven, that she forgot the serving of Jesus, the world, and herself.

So we must also forget and leave behind us whatever that does yet on earth bind our hearts and senses, and earnestly "reach forth unto those things which are before—pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Yea, we all "run in a race." So let us run, that "we may obtain."

To cleave unto the world, to addict ourselves to its vanities and seek pleasure therein, is "troubling ourselves with Martha about many things." For the world has nothing, however

brilliant its dazzling vanities may appear to its vain votaries, that can for a moment compose and comfort a believing soul; and certainly not in the hour of death. The world with all its attractions becomes loathsome to the soul in a state of pain and sickness: as it aspires only after the Centre and Object of its eternal rest; seeks nothing but Christ, its heavenly treasure—thirsting after him with a burning desire—yea, thirsting after him, "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, saying: "When shall I come and appear before God?" Psalm 42, 1. 2.

Lord Jesus! who hast loved us, and hast yielded up thy dear life at the cross for the blotting out of our sins, kindle within us, through thy Holy Spirit, a fervent desire after thee and thy grace, which satisfies the wishes of the heart, and quenches the thirst of the soul! Teach us to know our nothingness, to deny the world, and to strive for heaven. Permit us, when our temporal life becomes sickly and infirm, to feel thy life in our souls, to taste thy peace in our hearts; which is higher, more precious, and sweeter, than reason and sense can comprehend; so that no sufferings—not even pain, sickness, and death, can separate us from thee.

My life passes away! I hasten to the grave hourly, and who knows how long I may yet be permitted to live! Think, O man of thy death! Delay not; for one thing is needful.

Yes, one thing is needful! And this one thing, O Lord, teach me to know; all other things,

however they may appear, are only a heavy yoke, under which the heart labors and groans, and yet obtains no true enjoyment. But if I obtain this one thing needful, which makes up for all things, then I enjoy all things in this one thing.

"Now if we be dead with Christ; we believe that we shall also live with him." Rom. 6, 8.

Man, created after the image of God, is not his own Lord; has not given life, breath, and existence to himself; is not dependant on himself and his own will, but on a higher being, the Creator of all things, the Lord and commander over life and death.

The life of man, his time, his end, and his death, are matters with God. This is taught and confirmed by experience in many respects; and so also by Paul, when he says: "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Rom. 14, 7. 8.

Now if we are according to the truth of this divine doctrine, the "possession" of Him who so dearly "purchased" us with the blood of his own Son, it is our most sacred duty to praise and glorify Him—to whom we live, and whose we are—in our bodies and spirit, our lives and death.

But to die with Christ, does not mean only then to turn to Jesus when it appears, that the

Lord will require our souls of us, when death stands at our door, and the grave is near at hand. No indeed! It means that we should strive to die unto all sin, the world, and our evil lusts, during the time that God grants us grace to repentance—before we die; and this out of love, and through obedience, to Jesus Christ; that we should "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts;" so that we may say with Paul: "We die daily;" that is unto our evil wills and evil inclinations;—"I am crucified with Christ;" —that is, I "mortify" through the power of God's grace, which operates within me, the old man of sin, and put on the new man, which is "created in the image of God."

Now if we die with Christ in this sense, during our life-time, we are new creatures in him. We live—but no more unto ourselves: Christ lives in us. Temporal death, which only destroys "our earthly house of this tabernacle," can be no longer terrible to us; for it is to us the entrance into eternal life,

The grave cannot appear to us any longer a dark dungeon. No! But rather a soft bed of rest, until the glad morning of eternity, when we shall awaken renewed to the image of God. Our Savior died! But through death he entered into the glory of his Father. Again: "If we" (says the apostle) "have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection." Rom. 6, 5. Yea, where he is, there shall his servants, who

suffer, endure, and die with him, also be. He is willing to take us all unto him, so that we may be and remain where He, our Lord and Savior, himself is.

What a glorious consolation for thee, dear soul! that in sickness, in suffering, in pain, and even in death, thy faithful Savior stands at thy side, never forsakes thee, even in thy greatest necessity. His holy presence, his sweet spiritual consolation, the fresh dew of his grace, these it is, that ease the anxiety of the heart, and even in death afford us comfort and joy. Prov. 14, 22.

Look to Jesus, faithful sufferer! He sympathizes with thy affliction. He himself tasted the bitterness of death—experienced what it is to die. Look to him with full faith; his heart is full of grace and love, ever willing to assist thee. Sigh after him, supplicate him, and cry unto him, "as the hart panteth after the waterbrooks." Psalm 42, 1. He is a living fountain—the fountain of the Lord for all thirsty souls. His word is a heavenly manna, the strength and meat of life, which strengthens our faith and confidence in God, and gives us a foretaste of the sublime treasures of heaven.

Long for heaven! There your portion and inheritance are sumptuously prepared for thee; there the beautiful city of God shines in the pastures of Salem; there are the glorious mansions, prepared for us in our Father's house; there are the crowns of glory—the never fading crowns, glittering with pure gold—reserved for

all "good soldiers" of the faith; there await us, joy, salvation, immortality, and bliss, "quiet resting places," and calm, undisturbed heavenly peace; yea, what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered in the heart of man."

What a salvation! To stand with the glad citizens of heaven before the throne of God, and there to see Jesus "face to face." Yea, what a salvation! To prostrate ourselves with the "elect" multitude of heaven, and join in the "song of Moses and the Lamb;" to give eternal "honor, glory, and blessing" to him who has redeemed and saved us. What a salvation! To be with the Lord, and to enjoy eternally, with the multidue of so many thousands of holy angels, "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Here we sow in tears; there we shall reap with joy. Here in this vale of tears we go weeping, "bearing precious seed;" there we shall bring sheaves of joy and gratitude, as a "wave-offering before the Lord;" here we are often sad and afflicted; there we shall be cheered with the purest joy of angels. Here our eyes are dim and dark; there they shall be made bright to see the glory of God! O! who does not long to be dissolved, and to be where, after sorrow, anxiety, and tears, eternal treasures shall rejoice us. Towards this glory your Savior does now lead you, and perhaps you are not far any more from the "mark" where pain and conflict will end; where a crown, salvation, and the splendor of heaven await you. Fight

on, weary sufferer! Before long you will reach the place where affliction and woe will for ever disappear. Die with your Savior, and soon you will live with him in everlasting tents of peace. Suffer with him; and soon your mourning will be turned into a glad song of praise, when you will come "out of great tribulation" into your fatherland, the home of glorified saints, where you will be "clothed in white raiment."

How will you thank your Maker when you get there, that he made you perfect through suffering—led you through much tribulation into his kingdom; praise your Savior, that he has come into the world to save sinners, and lead them to heaven; in consequence of which, you have been found worthy to stand before the "Son of man."

Now the nearer you approach this mark—the nearer you approach the article of death—the more endeaver to be "conformed to the death of Christ." He began his sufferings with prayer and supplication, and concluded them by commending his spirit into the hands of his Father. Die with him in prayer, and do not "let him go, except he bless" thee. He died praying—and pray thou to him: "Father, Savior, Comforter!" "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." "Take back, this my soul, which thou hast created, redeemed, and sanctified. Be with me in this my last extremity; conduct me into the promised rest; let thy servant depart in peace, that my eyes may see thy glory, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee."

Firm was my health, my day was bright,
And I presumed 't would ne'er be night;
Fondly I said within my heart,
"Pleasure and peace shall ne'er depart."

But I forgot thine arm was strong,
Which made my mountain stand so long:
Soon as thy face began to hide,
My health was gone, my comforts died.

I cried aloud to thee, my God,
"What canst thou profit by my blood?
Deep in the dust can I declare
Thy truth, or sing thy goodness there?

"Hear me, O God of grace," I said,
"And bring me from among the dead:"
Thy words rebuked the pains I felt,
Thy pard'ning love remov'd my guilt.

My groans, and tears, and forms of woe,
Are turn'd to joy and praises now;
I throw my sackcloth on the ground,
And ease and gladness gird me round.

My tongue, the glory of my frame,
Shall ne'er be silent of thy name;
Thy praise shall sound thro' earth and heav'n,
For sickness heal'd, and sins forgiven.

AFTER NOTICE.

To the Kind Reader.—To whom hereby is wished, by the grace of God, temporal and eternal well-being, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

There is hereby committed to the Christian Reader, and particularly to the numerous rising generation, this Book, as a guidance to the Christian Faith, with God's own words from Holy Scripture, which is "able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 3, 15.

Part First of this Book is a useful conversation on the nature of saving faith, and the "acknowledging of the truth, in hope of eternal life, which God has promised." Tit. 1, 1. 2.

Part Second, commencing on page 140, is a brief instruction from Holy Scripture, in questions and answers; which are introduced into many churches, both in Europe and in America, and which are given to youth to commit to memory before baptism.

Part Third, commencing on page 151, is a Public Confession of our General Christian Faith, which was drawn up more than two hundred years ago, and adopted unanimously.

Part Fourth, commencing on page 179, appeared for the first time in print in 1804, and is also intended and arranged for youth, and

added here for their service. For "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine," &c. 2 Tim. 3, 16. But the whole work is "joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." 1 Cor. 1, 10.

Public Confessions of Faith are necessary, inasmuch as a Christian Church that looks for protection and liberty of conscience from government, is in duty bound to give such government an opportunity of judging of its ground of faith. For to government we are bound to be subject; as Peter says: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." 1 Pet. 2, 13. 14.

Confessions of Faith are also necessary and useful, in order to preserve union and order in the church. Thereby the ministers and overseers of the church can at their conferences remind one another anew, for the edification of themselves and the church, that they should, as Paul teaches: "Be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Phil. 2, 2.

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." 2 Thes. 2, 15. "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. 3, 15.

This doctrine of faith may be of great use to many, particularly to youth, if the same is read attentively—now and then re-read—and the quotations from scripture diligently looked after. Thereby the "senses are exercised," and our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ well grounded. Then this book will not only serve you for instruction in a right knowledge of the truth, but also as a mirror to your minds, whereby you may learn to know your true state, which is to be to you a chief concern; and also whether that faith, disposition, experience, and those effects which the Holy Spirit bestows on all believers, are found with you. Ask yourselves while reading—according to the nature of the subject—questions like the following: "If matters stand thus with the cause of God, and the way to salvation, as I learn from the word of God, how then stand matters between me and God? How with my love to God and my neighbor? How with the denial of myself, and my following of Christ? How with my refuge to the mediator betwen God and man, in order that I may come unto him, and be found in him? How with my conversion and new birth? How with my faith? Is the same of the nature here described? How stands it with my resolution and zeal to serve the Lord in holiness and in the discharge of every part of my duty? What says my conscience to all this?"

Now if you value and take to heart this exercise, as the "one thing needful" for you; name-

ly, self-examination, prayer, thanksgiving, and obedience in doing and suffering;—then peace and mercy will rest on all those who walk according to this rule. Then will the work of your faith, conversion, and sanctification, have a happy progress, through the power and goodness of our gracious Redeemer.

Beloved Brethren in the Lord, and fellow-laborers in the gospel:—Let us in common lay our hands to the promotion of the gospel; let each one endeavor to gain something with the talent entrusted to him; labor under the blessing of the Lord, to the glory and honor of Him, who has redeemed us, and to the salvation of many thousands.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.

BENJAMIN EBY.

Berlin, Upper Canada,
August 16, 1839.

ON PREDESTINATION.

The following remarks, on Predestination, were written by PETER BURKHOLDER, at the request of some of his friends, and were also translated into the English language.

Inasmuch as there is such a diversity of opinion among the different denominations of Christians, concerning man's free will, I would, with the help of God, and his grace, endeavor to set forth our belief, according to the word of God, on this subject. And although this subject is treated in the ninth and tenth articles of our Confession of Faith, namely, of the free will of man, and of election and reprobation, where the doctrine is maintained, that it is in the power of man, according to his free will, to choose what is good and to reject what is evil; or, to choose what is evil and reject what is good. But, as many object to this doctrine, by reason of the word of God, quoted by the apostle Paul, and the apostle's own words, where it is said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion: so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," (Rom. 9, 15. 16.) it will, perhaps, be productive of some good, to make some farther remarks on this subject. And,

In the first place, the above quoted words, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and

I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," must be well examined, and proved what is the meaning of them: and, to understand them in their proper meaning, and the apostle's drift in quoting them, we must compare them with many passages of his epistle to the Romans. And in doing this, we will examine the apostle's meaning in the twenty-eighth verse of the first chapter of this epistle, where he says, And even as they did not like to retain God, in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: and these words give us a key which will open to us many passages of this epistle: for here we find that, because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. Now, had they been willing to retain God in their mind, God would have had mercy and compassion on them: but as they rejected the knowledge of God and spurned him, he also rejected them, and gave them over to hardness of heart.

Moreover, in the 3d and 4th chapters of this epistle, the apostle Paul speaks of the works of the law, whereby no flesh shall be justified, but for which the Jews were so very zealous; as they still sought their justification by the deeds of the law, yet could not thereby be justified. And as the Romans were gentiles, the apostle wrote unto them, in this epistle, testifying that a man is not justified by the deeds of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. 3, 28. Here Paul

teaches and encourages the Gentiles, that, notwithstanding they have not the law, yet they have equal access to the salvation by Christ with the Jews; testifying, that God is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. 3, 29. For the general tenor and drift of this epistle is of the calling and election of the Gentiles, by faith in Jesus Christ, and of the rejection of the Jews, who go about to establish their own righteousness, for which they were very zealous as the apostle saith, For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 10, 2—4. Now, upon such ignorantly zealous Jews, who *will* and *run* to establish their own righteousness, contrary to the counsel of God, is the above passage of Paul's applicable, when he saith, "So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." For the Jews, with all their *willing*, and *running*, and compassing sea and land to make proselytes, they did not attain the righteousness of God; as God was not pleased to extend his mercy and compassion unto them, because they rejected his counsel, and sought it not by faith, but by the works of the law; and thus they stumbled at the stumbling stone and Rock of offence. 9, 31. 32.

This Rock is Christ, on whom the Jews would not believe; but the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained the righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: because they sought it not in the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, that justifieth the ungodly; and therefore their faith is counted for righteousness. And hence, these are they on whom the Lord will have mercy and compassion, because they did the will of God and sought him by faith in his own appointed way.

And thus it is in relation to our present condition: if we begin a thing, and go on with it according to our own mind and will, and contrary to the word and will of God, we may *will* and *run*, as we may, to our utmost ability, yet will God not have mercy nor compassion; but if we do according to the word and will of God, he will be pleased to have mercy, and compassionate us. Of this we have an example of Pharaoh, and the children of Israel: for the children of Israel went out of the land of Egypt according to the commandment of the LORD; and the Lord was with them on their journey, and with signs and wonders led them on: but Pharaoh, who in direct opposition to the word and will of God, pursued after the children of Israel, to destroy them, was himself, with all his host destroyed, without having any mercy or compassion shown them from the LORD: and this was done because Pharaoh would not obey

the voice of the LORD, to let Israel go: consequently, because "HE DID NOT LIKE TO RETAIN GOD IN HIS KNOWLEDGE." For, when Moses and Aaron were sent with the message of the LORD to Pharaoh, and told him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness; Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. Ex. 5, 1. 2. Now, because Pharaoh would not obey the message of the LORD, by Moses and Aaron, but hardened his heart against the God of heaven, he was given over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. And thus his heart was hardened by his own obduracy, to pursue after Israel to his own destruction.

Now in adverting to the words of the apostle, and his quotation from the Old Testament, where he saith, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that showeth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," (Rom. 9, 16—18.) we must, with this passage, compare the following scriptures, in order to find who they are on whom the Lord will have mercy, and also they whom he will harden. And here we find, as said above, that

they who did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave over to a reprobate mind; and thus their hearts were hardened: because they hardened their hearts against the counsel of God: as the apostle saith, Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath unto the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Rom. 2, 4. 5. Moreover, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Heb. 3, 7. 8. From these scriptures we see, that men themselves harden their hearts against the counsel of God, and his Holy Spirit, when He, by his goodness, would lead them to repentance: for when the Holy Spirit counsels men to repent, He will not harden their hearts against it: neither will God harden the hearts of any but those who have hardened their hearts against him, his counsels and his ways, through the deceitfulness of sin; as the apostle saith, Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Heb. 3, 13.

Hence, it is highly necessary for us to stand upon our guard, and watch! lest our hearts be hardened against God, through the deceitfulness of sin. But let us hear and obey the voice of God, and the dictates of his divine

Spirit, to be by him led in the path of wisdom and truth.

Farthermore, as predestinarians hold forth the doctrine that God, by his unchangeable decrees, has, from eternity, elected and chosen a part of mankind to be heirs of eternal glory, and by the same decrees he has reprobated and doomed the other part to eternal and unavoidable woe and misery: and as they ground this doctrine partly on the above quoted words of the apostle, (which we have in some measure explained,) and also on the type and figure represented by Jacob and Esau; of which we will, by the grace of God, therefore endeavor to give a farther explication, as follows:

As God is omniscient, and knew, from eternity, all future events, he has by figures and types represented what would come to pass.—And herein Jacob and Esau were striking types: Esau being a type of the old dispensation, as the Jews, with their laws and ceremonies, and Jacob a type of the new dispensation, as the christians, with the gospel and its privileges.—For, when Esau and Jacob were born, Jacob's hand took hold on Esau's heel; Esau's heel denoting the end of the law with its ceremonies, and the hands of Jacob the beginning of the gospel dispensation; and in like manner as Esau was the first born, so also was the law introduced before the gospel: and as the children struggled together before they were born, even so did the stubborn and unbelieving Jews strug-

gle and strive against the gospel—stumbling against the Stumbling-stone and Rock of offence. Rom. 9, 32. 33. Moreover, as Esau was red all over, like an hairy garment, may denote the rigour of the law, and also the rough, rude and unsubdued nature of the old man, in his natural birth. And that the elder shall serve the younger, may imply, that the law is subservient to the gospel. For the apostle Paul compares the law with Agar, the bond-maid of Abraham, saying, It is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman, was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants: the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. Gal. 4, 22–25.

And further, Paul speaks of Esau and Jacob saying, (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. Rom. 9, 11—13. Now this is somewhat hard to understand; and those that do not view the case of Esau and Jacob in the light of a spiritual and emblematical repre-

sentation, may greatly err, inasmuch as these words seem to import, That according to the purpose and determination of God, he had chosen the one, and rejected the other, without respect to their merit and future conduct, and therefore there would be no room given for the rejected to gain the love and favor of God, though he might earnestly seek it? and thus might the inference be drawn, that God is unrighteous! which question the apostle also asks, when he says, What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. v. 14. Yea, although we cannot trace God in his foreknowledge and providence—though his dispensation may be dark and mysterious—He is righteous in all his ways.

Now in that God saith, Not of works, but of him that calleth it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger, He gives us to understand, that the Jews sought their righteousness and justification by the works of the law, and whereby they could not attain to the righteousness which is acceptable with God: but as the *called*, by the grace of God they must obtain it through the gospel, by faith in Jesus Christ. For it pleased God that man's eternal blessedness should be of grace, and not of works; that all the glory, honor and praises of our salvation be to the Lord, and that no flesh glory in his presence.

Likewise, when it is said, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated, it is thereby typified,

that the love of God was manifested to us, in the gospel, and not in the law: because the law worketh wrath; (Rom. 4, 15.) and the wrath and displeasure of God, under which man had fallen, could not be appeased and reconciled by the law, and therefore it is hated. But in Christ Jesus, and his glorious gospel, is grace and truth; the wrath of God pacified, and the enmity slain, as the apostle saith, For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. Eph. 2, 14. 15. This is the love of God, which is prefigured in Jacob. And in like manner as Esau despised and sold his birthright, whereby was prefigured the birthright to the promised inheritance of the heavenly Caanan, through the atonement of the Savior Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of God; which promise was made to the Jews, as the elder brother; but as they despised this promised inheritance through the Redeemer, and rejected the Son of God, they thus sold their birthright to their younger brother, the Gentiles, who believed on Christ, and thus inherited the promised blessing, in preference to the unbelieving Jews: as it is written, And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold,

there are last, which shall be first; and there are first, which shall be last. Luke 13, 29. 30.

Moreover, as Esau could not obtain the blessing by his weapons, the quiver and bow in hunting venison; so also could not the unbelieving Jews obtain the gospel blessings by their zeal for the works of the law, and their carnal ordinances. And as Jacob inherited the blessing, so have all the believers in Christ obtained the blessing, and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Eph. 1, 3. Therefore it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

Now let us consider well, whether, from the emblematical representation of Esau and Jacob; and the words, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," the inference can be drawn, that God has, from the creation, chosen and elected a part of the human family to be heirs of eternal life, glory and happiness, while he has doomed and reprobated the others to eternal death, pain and misery! No, that be far from that GOD, who is righteous in all his ways.

For, notwithstanding the Law, wherein God manifested his *hatred of sin*, and which was prefigured by Esau, whom he hated, and by the works of *which*, the sinner could not be justified and obtain the favor of God; for, By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; (Rom. 3, 20.) yet God did not hate the penitent sinner, who was under the law and kept

it; but by the law, and its sacrifices, pointed him to the all-atoning LAMB, Jesus Christ, and his glorious gospel, by which is manifested his love to sinners; and which was prefigured by Jacob, whom he loved: and by which ALL are called, and invited to the gospel feast; as may be seen in many passages and parables in holy writ; but the fewest number received the call: hence it is written, For many are called, but few are chosen. Matt. 22, 14.

But here let us examine, what is the cause that but few are chosen? Is it not, because they *will not* obey the call, and come? For the invitation was as urgent to those who did not come, as to those who came? and even those who were *first bidden*, refused to come: for when the Lord sent out his servants at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready, (Luke 14, 17.) they all with one consent began to make excuses, and refused to come. These were of the house of Israel: and when all things were made ready, and they were bidden to come, and came not, was it not because they *would not come*—and not because they were not invited, and could not? Now when this was shewed unto the Lord, he said to his servants, Go quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the high-

ways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 14, 21. 23. The highways and hedges may denote the whole world; and this accords with the commandments given to the apostles, by our Lord Jesus Christ, when he ascended to heaven, saying, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16, 15. This call extends to *all*—both Jews and Gentiles—all nations, of every language and tongue—free grace for all those who *will come* and accept it. Now if the greater part are reprobated and rejected, why are they all called? Our Lord exclaims, over that great and populous city Jerusalem: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Matt. 23, 37.

From these scriptures, and the following, it is plain and evident, that it is in the FREE WILL of man to accept the call and invitation of the gospel, and come to Christ and live: or to reject it and perish: for it is the will of God our Savior, that all men should be gathered under the wings of his mercy and be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. 2, 4. This is evidenced by many passages in holy writ. For God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, as he saith by the prophet, Say unto them, As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked

turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Ez. 33—11. Also saith Peter, The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. 3—9. Moreover, Moses saith, See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other Gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life. Deut. 30, 15—30. Likewise Joshua saith to Israel, Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. Josh. 24, 14. 15. Behold, saith the Spirit, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it. Rev. 3, 8. Also, The Spirit and bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 22, 17.

Now, if God declares with an oath, That he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; and that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; and if he sets before them life and good, and death and evil, and commands them to love the LORD their God, to walk in his ways, and to choose life; and Joshua, after exhorting the people to fear the LORD, and serve him, and to choose for the best, says, As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD:—moreover, if a door is set open that no man can shut—and if the bride and the Spirit say, Come. If all that hear say, Come,—if all that are athirst shall come, and if whosoever will may come and take the water of life freely,—can it yet be said, that God—that Holy, Just and Good God who is no respecter of persons, (Acts 10, 34.)—should, in his foreknowledge, have reprobated and abandoned some of his rational creatures—unavoidably on their

part—to eternal death and misery!! Would it not be inconsistent with the above scripture texts, and in oppositian to them? And, moreover, would it not be inconsistent with the divine attributes?

Farthermore, That Christ Jesus, by his sacrifice and blood, has made atonement for the sins of the whole world, is clear and evident from the following scriptures: for Paul saith, Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Rom. 5, 18. And John saith, That we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the Propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2, 1. 2. Moreover, Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins. And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. 4, 10—14. Who his own-self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 1 Pet. 2. 24. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. 3, 18. And when John saw Jesus coming unto him, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1, 29. The Samaritans said unto the wo-

man, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world. 4, 42. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. 2 Cor. 5, 19. Thus we see that full atonement is made for the sins of the whole world; and that a door of free grace is open for ALL who will come, and accept it, by faith in Jesus Christ.

But, nevertheless, we also believe and acknowledge that, according to the holy scriptures, God has his elected and chosen people, who are known to him, and whom he hath chosen in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world. For Christ saith, For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive THE VERY ELECT. Matt. 24, 24. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. John 15, 16. Also the apostle saith, And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he

justified, them he also glorified. Rom. 8, 28—30. Again he saith, According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Eph. 1, 4—7. Moreover, it is said, that, These that are with the Lamb, are called, and chosen, and faithful. Rev. 17, 14.

Here let us examine the reason, why some are elected, called and chosen, while others are hardened in sin, and reprobated? and by thus examining, will we not find, that it is owing to their own *willingness* or *unwillingness*, in receiving the message of peace to their souls? For the apostle saith, Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became *followers of us, and of the Lord*, having *received the word* in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. 1 Thess. 1, 4—6. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye *received the word of God* which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in

truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. For ye, brethren, *became followers of the churches of God* which in Judea are in Christ Jesus. 2, 13. 14. Then they that *gladly received his word* were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts 2, 41. And the people with one accord *gave heed unto those things which Philip spake*, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. But when they *believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 8, 6—12. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and *glorified the word of the Lord:* and as many as were ordained to eternal life, *believed.* 13, 48. I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, saith the inspired apostle. Phil. 3, 14. And Peter saith, Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. 2 Pet. 1, 10.

Now does it not appear evident, from the foregoing scriptures, that all those who gladly and willingly receive the word, believe in Christ, keep his sayings and follow him, are they that are the called, the elected, and the chosen? They press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus—give diligence to make their calling and election sure—And thus "The kingdom of heaven suffereth vio-

lence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. 11, 12. Yea, they are elected and chosen, because they obey the voice of the Lord, hear his sayings, and do them: Fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. And thus Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey him.* Heb. 5, 9.

And on the other hand, those that are hardened and reprobated, are they who reject the offered grace and spurn it, as the apostle Peter saith, For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water. 2 Pet. 3, 5. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. John 3, 19. 20. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Rom. 1, 21—28. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; *because they received not the love of the truth,* THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might

be damned, who *believed not the truth*, but had *pleasure in unrighteousness*. 2 Thess. 2, 10—12. But unto them that are contentious, and *do not obey the truth*, but *obey unrighteousness*, indignation and wrath. Rom. 2, 8.

Here, also, does it not appear plain and evident, from the foregoing scriptures, that these, and these only, are hardened and reprobated who harden themselves, and are wilfully ignorant of the knowledge of God and his ways?—who love darkness rather than light?—who *will not* retain God in their knowledge?—who *will not* receive the love of the truth and be saved, but spurn the knowledge of God and his grace from them, and persist in their obstinacy and impenitency on the road down to eternal ruin? for, He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Prov. 29, 1.

Lastly, some may yet object and say, that according to the words of the apostle Paul, "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," (Phil. 2, 13.) that man can do nothing towards his soul's salvation, but that all is from the Lord whether he be saved or lost? But by the words of Paul we understand that God graciously operates on the minds of men, by the preaching of the word and the influence of the Holy Spirit, to produce in them a willingness, without any restraint, to come to the Savior and seek their soul's salvation; and this seems to be intimated by the

apostle in the preceding and succeeding verses, where he says, Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.—Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. 12, 16.

But here it should be noticed, that to this willingness which is produced in the minds of men by the means of grace, as said above, the carnal mind is enmity; and upon this carnal mind, the adversary of souls operates to produce an unwillingness to obey the call and voice of the Lord, and to walk in his ways: Here man is brought into a strait, as there are now, as it were, two opposite natures within him, namely, the inward man, and the natural man; and these are differently wrought upon, and produces a continual warfare. Of this the apostle saith, I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Rom. 7, 21—23. Again he saith, For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would. Gal. 5, 17. Hence Paul asks, Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves ser-

vants to obey, his servant ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? Rom. 6, 16. And Peter saith, For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. 2 Pet. 2, 19. In this conflict is set before us, as Moses set before the children of Israel, LIFE and DEATH—blessing and cursing—therefore let us choose life. Let us fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto we are called, and thus let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure; that we may obtain the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give at that day, unto all them that love his appearance. 2 Tim. 4, 8.

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